Predicting the Vulnerable Target of Workplace Victimization: A Mediated-Moderation Model

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ABSTRACT

There has been limited research on understanding how situational factors may elicit vulnerability in employees. Drawing on insights from learned helplessness theory and victim precipitation theory, I conducted two studies examining the role of employee perceptions about situational factors in explaining workplace victimization. In the first study, I investigated role ambiguity as a predictor of workplace victimization, while examining how role ambiguity interacted with perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate. Furthermore, I examined the relationship between these predictors and victimization on general health. Drawing on the findings from my first study, I investigated the direct effects of perceived supervisor support on workplace victimization from co-workers in a second study, while examining the interaction of the former with perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate. Moreover, I examined workplace victimization from co-workers as a mediator between perceived supervisor support and emotional exhaustion.

In the first study, I used a representative sample of the UK population consisting of 2,067 working individuals. Secondary data was used for this study since the data contained the measures needed to test my research question, while allowing for a representative sample. The results revealed that the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization was moderated by perceived leadership support, while workplace victimization mediated the relationship between role ambiguity and general health. Employees who experienced high role ambiguity, low perceived leadership

support, and a high impersonal work climate were more likely to experience victimization, which was associated with poorer general health.

In the second study, I used a sample of 260 employees from a large hospital and found a direct relationship between perceptions of supervisor support and workplace victimization from co-workers as well as emotional exhaustion. In particular, employees who perceived low supervisor support were more likely to experience workplace victimization from co-workers when they perceived an instrumental ethical climate, while victimization from co-workers mediated the relationship between perceived supervisor support and emotional exhaustion when perceiving a high instrumental ethical climate. This dissertation has important practical implications for deterring victimization, including the need for proactive signs of support from leaders and a supportive work climate.

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I read a recent study that reports the absolutely vital role of one's relations with his/her parents during his/her upbringing on the success that he/she has in life. I believe that I am living proof of this.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Workplace victimization has gained increased scholarly, managerial, and media attention over the past two decades (Aquino & Thau, 2009). Over this period, researchers have found that victimization in the workplace is highly prevalent (e.g., Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007; Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006) and has detrimental consequences for employees, groups, and organizations (see Cortina, 2008). To illustrate, researchers have found that 41 percent of employees in U.S. workplaces have been targets of some form of aggression (Schat et al., 2006), while 47 percent of employees in U.S. workplaces have been subjected to some form of bullying over a two year period (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). As for outcomes, victimization at work can result in poor physical and mental health for targets (Hoel, Faragher, & Cooper, 2004), increased intent to leave among targets (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2008), reciprocal victimizing behaviors at the team-level (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998), and increased aggressiveness in the organizational culture (O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Glew, 1996). As a result, researchers contend that victimization in the workplace is an issue that requires further scholarly attention (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Sidle, 2009).

One avenue that can be taken to understand why victimization occurs in the workplace is to explore the conditions or circumstances under which such behaviors may be more likely to occur (Tepper, 2007). Theoretical reviews in the field have suggested that there are two target types: vulnerable and provocative (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). The vulnerable target is one who, due to his/her disposition or situation, appears to potential perpetrators as a 'safe' target (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Tepper et al., 2006). More specifically, the target may be considered safe to victimize when he/she appears weak and unlikely to defend him/herself (Tepper et al., 2006). For example, a passive and submissive employee may appear vulnerable to potential perpetrators (Aquino, 2000). Alternatively, the situation surrounding targets may weaken their likelihood of defending themselves (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). For example, when targets perceive that their supervisor will not support them against the perpetrator. In contrast, the provocative target is one who tends to provoke others into targeting him/her. This can be done through discourteous or rude behavior towards another person (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004).

To date, much of the research investigating the vulnerable target type has focused on dispositional variables such as negative affect and self-esteem as individual characteristics (e.g., Aquino, Grover, Bradfield, & Allen, 1999; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006). Studies investigating other target or work characteristics that suggest target vulnerability have often been plagued by conflicting findings (Aquino & Thau, 2009), as will be discussed in my review of the literature. While researchers have often attempted to understand employee vulnerability to

victimization by examining dispositional characteristics, there has been relatively less research investigating how situational factors may increase employee vulnerability (see Aquino & Thau, 2009). Employee perceptions of the situation in particular may influence how they behave or appear in the presence of other employees and potential perpetrators. Understanding target vulnerability is particularly important to the field. By understanding how situational factors may increase employee vulnerability, researchers and practitioners will be more effectively positioned to identify interventions that can reduce the likelihood of victimizing behaviors. On the other hand, organizations and HRM practitioners are less able to resolve issues related to targets' personality and general disposition (Aquino & Bradfield, 2000).

Martinko and Gardner (1982) developed a model of organizational induced learned helplessness. In their conceptual model, they outline key factors within the internal work environment that may induce feelings of helplessness among employees. The first major component they discuss is the nature of the work. In particular, they suggest that employees who are unclear about their role and responsibilities will feel a sense of helplessness. Research has used role ambiguity to measure these effects (e.g., Tubre & Collins, 2000). The second major component they discuss is leadership and supervision. More specifically, they suggest that when employees feel that they are not supported by their line manager and other leaders within the organization they will tend to feel helpless. To measure these effects, I examine employees' perceptions about the support they receive from both their line manager/supervisor and other leaders (henceforth referred to as perceived leadership support).

Finally, Martinko and Gardner (1982) also suggest that organizational policies such as its structure (e.g., bureaucracy), reward systems, and performance appraisal systems may induce helplessness in employees. Martinko and Gardner (1982) explain that bureaucratic policies can create feelings of an impersonal work climate. Moreover, they argue that performance appraisal systems and reward systems that employees feel do not support them at work will also create perceptions of an impersonal work climate in which employees do not feel valued (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). In other words, each of these organizational policies and practices make the employee feel that the work climate is impersonal and thus unsupportive. To measure these effects, I capture the extent to which employees perceive the work climate to be impersonal. Therefore, according to Martinko and Gardner's (1982) organizational induced learned helplessness model, high role ambiguity, perceptions of low leadership support, and perceptions of an impersonal work climate induce feelings of helplessness in employees. These three variables are used because they sum up the factors in Martinko and Gardner's (1982) model. Since researchers have described the vulnerable target as one who is helpless (e.g., Harvey, Treadway, & Heames, 2006), I use Martinko and Gardner's (1982) model and arguments to develop a conceptual model that tests whether the interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceptions of an impersonal work climate influence employee reports of workplace victimization. Therefore, I use insights from the model developed by Martinko and Gardner (1982) to investigate whether these factors may explain employee reports of victimization at work.

Indeed, an important indicator of employee vulnerability to victimization may be a sense of helplessness (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Harvey et al., 2006). Harvey et al. (2006) first applied the concept of learned helplessness to the workplace victimization literature and explained how feelings of helplessness can cause targets to feel helpless against victimizing behavior. This would result in these targets believing that not much can be done to change the perpetrator's behavior (Harvey et al., 2006). Learned helplessness theory (Seligman, 1975) suggests that individuals who feel that they have limited control over their outcomes will develop a sense of helplessness. Moreover, helplessness becomes a learned behavior when individuals experience and perceive a lack of control over their outcomes (Seligman, 1975). In the work context, this suggests employees' perceptions about limited control over their work outcomes. Learned helplessness theory also suggests that feelings of helplessness will affect employee health (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). Therefore, drawing on these insights from learned helplessness theory and particularly from Martinko and Gardner's (1982) conceptual model, I suggest and test whether factors that have been theorized to induce helplessness can similarly explain workplace victimization.

If certain factors may explain feelings of helplessness, these same factors may also explain employee vulnerability, which victim precipitation theory suggests may draw victimizing behaviors from others. To illustrate, individuals who experience helplessness tend to become passive and numb (Peterson & Seligman, 1983) and engage in maladaptive behavior (Martinko & Gardner, 1982), which can become apparent to those who they have exchanges with at work (Harvey et al., 2006). Features of

vulnerability such as becoming passive and numb and engaging in maladaptive behaviors can become apparent to others while working together in the organization.

The research question for the first study of this dissertation is to understand the role of workplace victimization in explaining the relationship between role ambiguity and general health. Furthermore, I seek to understand how employee perceptions of support – from both leaders and work climate – influence the role of workplace victimization. In order to investigate this research question, I draw on insights from learned helplessness theory and victim precipitation theory. The research question for the second study builds on the findings from my first study and seeks to understand the role of supervisor support more directly in explaining workplace victimization and emotional exhaustion.

As will be discussed, role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceptions of work climate have also been identified in the literature as central factors that can explain individuals' confusion and ambiguity about the link between effort and performance (i.e. work outcomes) (e.g., Beehr & Bhagat, 1985; Carlson & Kacmar, 1994; Peterson et al., 2003). Notably, a lack of clarity about the link between effort and performance suggests feelings of limited control over work outcomes (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985). As mentioned earlier, feelings of limited control over outcomes represents a central feature of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975).

By testing the interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceived impersonal work climate in predicting workplace victimization and general health, I test a framework based on insights from learned helplessness theory. Additionally, I draw upon and blend victim precipitation theory to theorize the

relationship between the former three factors and workplace victimization, thus allowing me to also test victim precipitation theory. Victim precipitation theory is often used to explain why vulnerable targets are victimized (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Kim & Glomb, 2010). More specifically, victim precipitation theory suggests that the presence of vulnerability and helplessness in an employee can draw and elicit victimizing behaviors from others in the workplace (Aquino, 2000; Tepper et al., 2006).

This study offers four key contributions to the literature. First, I extend the vulnerable target type to include factors that have been suggested to result in helplessness through the interacting roles of role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceived impersonal work climate. Notably, I theorize how the interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceived impersonal work climate can increase the likelihood of experiencing workplace victimization. Based on extant literature in workplace victimization, prior meta-analytic evidence has supported the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization (see Bowling & Beehr, 2006) and there has also been evidence to support the negative effects of role ambiguity on general health (see Danna & Griffin, 1999). However, there has been a lack of attention towards perceptions of supervisor/leader support and perceptions of climate in meta-analytic research on workplace victimization (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Hershcovis, 2011; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Hershcovis et al., 2007). Moreover, meta-analytic evidence has revealed a moderate relationship ($r = .29$) between role ambiguity and workplace victimization (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that the relationship between role ambiguity and general

health are likely influenced by moderating variables (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Hence, the current study sheds light on the importance of considering the role that employee perceptions of leadership support and work climate may play in the context of role ambiguity and both workplace victimization and general health. To illustrate, I predict that high levels of perceived support from leaders can significantly attenuate the effects of role ambiguity in predicting victimization at work since employees will feel *less* helpless, submissive, and vulnerable in relation to the perpetrator when they perceive that their leaders support them. Therefore, while the extant literature suggests that role ambiguity is a predictor of workplace victimization, this study theorizes and hypothesizes that perceived leadership support attenuates and suppresses the effects of high role ambiguity in predicting victimization.

Second, this study makes a contribution to theory in the workplace victimization literature. Several researchers have contended that the workplace victimization literature is under-theorized (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Baillien et al., 2009; Parzefall & Salin, 2010). In this study, victimization is theorized based on a conceptual blending of insights from learned helplessness theory and victim precipitation theory. Organizational theorists have recently called for greater conceptual blending, which more specifically refers to a process of theorizing wherein "constructs from two domains are merged to produce new insights" (Oswick, Fleming, & Hanlon, 2011: p. 328). Moreover, this merging often takes the form of two theories that are blended to understand a phenomenon (Oswick et al., 2011). The conceptual blending in this dissertation makes a theoretical contribution to the workplace victimization literature by addressing the limitations of both victim

precipitation theory (criminology literature) and learned helplessness theory (psychology literature), while using both simultaneously to explain the phenomenon under investigation. In essence, I examine the key factors that predict helplessness among targets and explore whether these factors elicit and draw greater victimizing behaviors from others incorporating insights from both the learned helplessness theory framework and victim precipitation theory.

Third, I draw upon learned helplessness theory to the field of workplace victimization. While only a small handful of researchers have used learned helplessness theory as a possible explanation for the *outcomes* of individuals who experience victimization (e.g., Harvey et al., 2006; Peterson & Seligman, 1983), I draw upon this framework to explain the possible *predictors* and *outcomes* of workplace victimization. As mentioned, learned helplessness theory predicts that the general health of individuals who experience helplessness will deteriorate (Seligman, 1975). Moreover, this investigation also seeks to address mixed and surprising findings by Duffy et al. (2002) who reported a weak relationship between perceived supervisor support and target employee outcomes such as increased somatic complaints.

Fourth, while some studies have suggested that leadership type is associated with increased victimization (e.g., Hoel et al., 2010; Skogstad et al., 2007), I provide an alternative explanation of this relationship by suggesting that the way in which targets *perceive* the existing support of leaders can increase their sense of helplessness. This helplessness, in turn, is theorized to make their vulnerability more apparent and salient to other employees as situational markers of vulnerability (see Aquino & Thau, 2009).

Therefore, I theorize that leadership – through perceived leadership support – increases employee vulnerability to victimizing behaviors, rather than leadership styles per se. Furthermore, I also examine perceptions of the work climate. For example, while some employees may feel that the leaders who they report to are supportive, they may feel that the organization more broadly is impersonal and does not treat employees well. Alternatively, some employees may feel that the specific leaders who they report to are unsupportive, but the organization more broadly values its employees. Even when employees who have high role ambiguity perceive that their leaders are supportive, they will be more likely to experience victimization at work when they perceive that the work climate more broadly is impersonal. In order to investigate the varied relationships proposed, a complex mediated moderation model including three-way interactions is theorized, developed, and tested.

In the following sections, I first provide a review of the workplace victimization literature. Second, I discuss victim precipitation theory, learned helplessness theory, and the three key predictors that may help explain workplace victimization. Third, I present the hypotheses of the study. Fourth, I outline the methods section with a discussion of the data collection procedures, sample characteristics, and measures. Fifth, I discuss the analytic strategy taken for testing this data. Sixth, I present the results and findings. After presenting the results and findings from this study, I follow a similar structure to introduce and present my findings for study 2. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the theoretical and practical contributions of the two studies, highlight interesting directions for future research, and the limitations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this review of the literature, I seek to provide a definition of workplace victimization and discuss the parameters of this definition. Given the conceptual model posited by Martinko and Gardner (1982) discussed above, I focus on prior research that has investigated the relationship between the nature of work that employees perform and workplace victimization. Following this, I focus on Martinko and Gardner's (1982) second factor – perceptions of support from leaders – and review the literature examining the relationship between leadership and workplace victimization. Finally, the literature surrounding the relationship between workplace victimization and the work climate – Martinko and Gardner's (1982) third factor – is explored. Prior to reviewing the literature around these three main factors, I review prior research investigating the relationship between workplace victimization and personality and demographic factors.

Definition and Parameters of Workplace Victimization

The construct of workplace victimization reflects whether an employee perceives that he/she has "been exposed, either momentarily or repeatedly, to aggressive actions emanating from one or more other persons" (Aquino, 2000: p. 172). Consistent with prior research, I conceptualize victimization as negative and harmful acts that are perpetrated by one or more persons based on the perception of the target. According to this conceptualization, the intentionality of the perpetrator is of less importance than whether targets perceive that they have experienced acts that they consider to be negative (Aquino & Thau, 2009).

As Tepper (2007) summarizes, the general research question underlying the workplace victimization literature has been, "What kinds of people under what conditions are likely to become targets of coworkers' aggressive actions?" (Aquino et al., 1999: p. 260). This dissertation is particularly interested in exploring the conditions under which employees may become targets. As Aquino and Bradfield (2000) mention, studying employee characteristics as antecedents of victimization – as has tended to dominate the broader victimization literature – tends to place blame on the employee. Therefore, the logical extension is to understand and focus on the conditions – or perceptions of these conditions – under which employees become increasingly likely to experience victimization at work.

A very important contribution to the field has been a recent review by Aquino and Thau (2009) of the workplace victimization literature. In this review, Aquino and Thau (2009) identify a number of constructs that fall under the umbrella of workplace victimization. These include: workplace aggression, workplace violence, workplace bullying, workplace harassment, workplace incivility, and social undermining. Hershcovis (2011) recently called for a similar integration of victimization-based constructs in the literature. Nevertheless, similar to Aquino and Thau (2009) and Hershcovis (2011), I exclude sexual harassment and interactional justice from my review and analysis. Sexual harassment typically involves a gender-based element that often entails different behavioral and motivational aspects, while also often implying a social categorical buffer for targets (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). Interactional justice involves

a broader element of organizational justice that is typically not included within the workplace victimization literature (Aquino & Thau, 2009).

Aquino and Thau (2009) conclude that there have been a number of conflicting findings on the antecedents of workplace victimization such as personality factors and demographics. Their work extends an earlier meta-analysis conducted by Bowling and Beehr (2006) in which the latter authors identify a number of antecedents of workplace victimization. This shift towards understanding the characteristics of the target of workplace victimization has led to a number of interesting research directions; however, there has been scant attention to theory when identifying and examining possible target characteristics (Aquino & Thau, 2009).

In the workplace victimization literature, researchers have investigated a number of factors that may predict workplace victimization. In terms of antecedents, in addition to employee personality and demographics, I will review the findings related to role/work characteristics, leadership styles, and psychological climate. Thereafter, I will review studies that have examined the work and health-related consequences of victimizing behaviors for the target.

Antecedents of Workplace Victimization

Personality Factors and Traits

A number of studies have examined the relationship between personality factors and traits and workplace victimization (e.g., Aquino et al., 1999; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Tepper et al., 2006; Vartia, 1996). Researchers have consistently found a

relationship between workplace victimization and both high negative affect (e.g., Aquino et al., 2000; Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Tepper et al., 2006) and low self-esteem (e.g., Harvey & Keashly, 2003; Vartia, 1996). Negative affect can be described as a tendency to experience emotions that include anxiety, fear, sadness, and anger (Watson & Clark, 1984). Consistent with the typology of targets described in Aquino and Lamertz's (2004) study, employees who appear scared, sad, and anxious may tend to appear more vulnerable to potential perpetrators. Theoretical explanations have suggested that individuals who have high negative affect and low self-esteem will appear to perpetrators as highly vulnerable because such individuals tend to display low confidence (Hoel et al., 1999). However, researchers have questioned the causality of these relationships (e.g., Aquino & Thau, 2009; Hoel et al., 1999). More specifically, researchers have questioned whether high negative affect and low self-esteem may in fact be consequences of victimizing behaviors (Aquino & Thau, 2009). The lack of longitudinal studies investigating these relationships implies that they remain inconclusive. In terms of cognitive ability, Kim and Glomb (2010) interestingly found a positive relationship between high cognitive ability and victimization. Finally, researchers have also investigated the relationship between workplace victimization and the five factor model of personality (e.g., Coyne et al., 2000; Coyne et al., 2003; Glaso et al., 2007; Persson et al., 2009). However, the findings have tended to report mixed and contradictory findings across extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, while high neuroticism has tended to receive the most support of the five with workplace victimization (Aquino & Thau, 2009).

To illustrate, Persson et al. (2009) found that targets have higher levels of neuroticism and extraversion (particularly impulsiveness). Glaso et al. (2007) similarly found that targets have higher levels of neuroticism; however, reported that targets also have lower levels of extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be supported. To illustrate, employees with low levels of introversion, which suggests that they are passive and unlikely to retaliate to negative behaviors (Goldberg, 1990), will tend to be seen as vulnerable by potential perpetrators. Conversely, employees who are low in agreeableness may be targeted because of their unwillingness to agree at times with others. Finally, employees with low levels of conscientiousness may be viewed by others as less likely to recognize that they are being victimized particularly when such behaviors are subtle. Individuals who have low conscientiousness tend to reflect less on events that occur around them and are more willing to overlook them (Goldberg, 1990). This would tend to make targets with low conscientiousness vulnerable to victimization.

Interestingly, Glaso et al. (2007) found two separate clusters of targets, which led them to question whether a general personality profile for targets exists. Furthermore, previous studies by Coyne and his colleagues (e.g., Coyne et al., 2000; Coyne et al., 2003) reported conflicting results with respect to extraversion and conscientiousness. However, Coyne et al. (2003) did find that targets had lower levels of emotional stability in comparison to non-targets. Hence, while researchers have found conflicting results with many personality traits (e.g., extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness),

there has nonetheless been a consistent finding that targets tend to have higher levels of neuroticism.

An alternative explanation for the conflicting findings may be attributed to the different types of targets. For instance, Aquino and Lamertz (2004) and Zapf and Einarsen (2011) suggested that there are two target types: vulnerable and provocative. Thus, extraverts may more often fall under the provocative type while introverts may fall within the vulnerable type. Similarly, employees with low agreeableness may often fall within the provocative type while employees with high agreeableness may tend to fall within the vulnerable type.

Demographic Factors

Similar to the relationships between the personality factor model and workplace victimization, demographic variables such as age, gender, and length of service have also been plagued by conflicting findings with workplace victimization across studies (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Hoel et al., 1999). Some researchers have reported that females are more likely to be victimized at work than males (Lewis & Gunn, 2007; Salin, 2001; Salin, 2003), while other researchers have reported little to no differences across gender (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Leymann, 1996). Researchers have found that in situations of workplace victimization, males are typically only targeted by other males, while females tend to be victimized by both males and females, but more often by females (see Hoel et al., 1999). In relation to age, Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) found a higher likelihood of older employees being victimized than younger ones. However, as with gender, conflicting findings have been reported with respect to age (Vartia, 1996). A

meta-analysis also revealed relatively weak relationships between these demographic factors and workplace victimization (Bowling & Beehr, 2006).

Studies have also found somewhat mixed findings related to the relationship between ethnic background and workplace victimization (e.g., Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Lewis & Gunn, 2007). To illustrate, Fox and Stallworth (2005) found that Hispanics/Latinos experienced significantly higher rates of victimization than Whites; however, they found no significant differences in the prevalence rates between Blacks, Asians, and Whites. Conversely, Lewis and Gunn (2007) conducted a study of workplace victimization and bullying in the public sector in the UK and examined whether ethnic minorities are victimized in the workplace at a higher rate than White respondents. Interestingly, they found significant differences between White respondents and ethnic respondents; ethnic minorities were almost four times more likely to experience workplace victimization and bullying than White respondents. Indeed, several of the findings that they reported were quite startling. They found that ethnic minorities were almost fourteen times more likely to be ignored while at work by their line manager, almost seven times more likely to face continued criticism of their work by colleagues of equal rank, and over nine times more likely to be told to quit their job by colleagues of equal rank than White respondents.

The Nature of the Work and Job Role

Researchers have found that the nature of an employee's role and/or work is associated with victimization in the workplace. For example, employees who perceive a high level of autonomy over their work are less likely to experience victimizing

behaviors (Aquino et al., 1999). Employees who find their work uninteresting and repetitive are also more likely to experience victimizing behaviors (Einarsen et al., 1994). In addition, employees who believe that their work lacks meaning are more prone to being targeted (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004). Greater workloads have also been associated with increased workplace victimization (Quine, 2001). Moreover, employees who experience role conflict have been found to be subjected to greater levels of victimizing behaviors (Skogstad et al., 2007). Finally, role ambiguity has also been associated with increased workplace victimization (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Notelaers et al., 2010; Quine, 2001). Interestingly, very little theoretical explanation has been provided in these studies to explain why role ambiguity results in increased victimization.

Aquino and Thau (2009) assert that role ambiguity has been consistently found to be a predictor of workplace victimization. However, the direct relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization is not immediately obvious. Role ambiguity refers to a lack of clarity about one's work and tasks. One logical extension is that individuals who are unclear about their tasks may be victimized by those employees who rely on them such as supervisors or group members. A similar possible theoretical explanation is that employees who are unclear about their work and role will appear less confident about themselves and their work, which can represent a sign of vulnerability to others in the workplace. In either case, role ambiguity represents an indicator and situational marker of vulnerability. However, the nature of some types of work may be inherently ambiguous, which calls into question whether such a theoretical explanation

can be generalized. Therefore, it is likely that the extent to which employees perceive support from their leaders and a work climate that is not impersonal can alleviate feelings of low confidence, which can make such markers of vulnerability less salient to others.

Leadership and Management Styles

Interestingly, researchers have found that a number of leadership and management styles are associated with victimization. More specifically, studies have reported that authoritarian management (Coyne et al., 2003), weak and indistinct leadership styles (Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007), autocratic leadership styles (Hoel et al., 2010), and laissez-faire leadership styles (Skogstad et al., 2007) are associated with increased victimizing behaviors. Workplace victimization has been linked with an abuse of power in the organization (Einarsen et al., 1994). While some researchers have identified the abuse of power from leaders (Einarsen et al., 1994), others have asserted that leadership can be too passive, which then stimulates victimizing behaviors within the organization (Skogstad et al., 2007a). To illustrate, research suggests that management tends to give up much of their leadership responsibility in situations characterized by high levels of conflict (Ashforth, 1994).

Leadership described as weak and indistinct often leads to unresolved conflicts which, in turn, results in victimizing behaviors (Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007). To illustrate, weak leadership is less likely to intervene when workplace victimization is occurring, which may typically result in an aggressor perceiving a lower risk of being caught and punished for engaging in victimizing behaviors towards others. As a result, this will make him/her more likely to engage in such behaviors (Salin, 2003). Therefore,

leadership styles and the strategies they use to resolve conflicts have been suggested as a predictor of workplace victimization (Bulutlar & Unler Oz, 2009; Salin, 2003; Vartia, 1996).

Targets tend to report an authoritarian management style in their organization (Vartia, 1996). Moreover, authoritarian management styles have also been reported as an antecedent to abusive supervision (see Aryee et al., 2007). In addition, autocratic (Hoel & Cooper, 2000; Salin, 2003; Vartia, 1996) and laissez-faire leadership styles (Einarsen et al., 1994; Hoel & Cooper, 2000; Leymann, 1996; Skogstad et al., 2007a) are also often associated with the presence of victimizing behavior. Furthermore, authoritarian management styles, through creating fear (Hoel & Salin, 2003), may indirectly encourage supervisors to use victimizing behavior as a mechanism to display their authority.

In this review, it is apparent that a key missing variable is the support that targets perceive from leaders as a predictor (and perhaps moderator) to victimizing behaviors. While this review has revealed that some studies have found that certain leadership styles are associated with increased victimizing behaviors, it cannot be concluded that employees were not targeted because of a lack of perceived support from these leaders, which made them feel helpless against perpetrators. Therefore, although research has found a relationship between leadership style and workplace victimization, as I discussed earlier I believe it is the perceptions of leadership support that more directly influence employee vulnerability than leadership style per se. As a result, this dissertation focuses more closely on perceptions of support from leaders.

The only study to my knowledge that did investigate role ambiguity and perceived supervisor support together found that the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization is not significant when controlling for perceived supervisor support (Hauge et al., 2011). Hauge et al. (2011) tested their model over a sample of 10,652 respondents across 65 organizations in diverse industries. This recent study raises new questions about the earlier-mentioned consistency of the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization (e.g., Aquino & Thau, 2009; Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Conceptually, perceived leadership support may indeed attenuate the effects of role ambiguity by giving employees greater confidence that they can rely on, and seek assistance from, leaders in the organization. However, this hypothesis remains tentative because of the very limited attention to this relationship. In addition, the study by Hauge et al. (2011) used only a single dichotomous (yes or no) item to measure whether subjects have experienced victimization. This raises questions about the reliability (and validity) of their victimization measure. Finally, these mixed findings suggest the potential for moderating conditions, which Hauge et al. (2011) did not explore. Therefore, further attention is required to this potential relationship. In particular, role ambiguity and perceived leadership support may in fact have an interaction relationship in their influence on workplace victimization.

The Work Climate

Finally, a few researchers have also investigated the role of the work climate (e.g., Aquino et al., 2006; Dupre & Barling, 2006; Inness et al., 2005; Inness et al., 2008), typically as psychological climate. For example, Aquino et al. (2006) examined whether,

and found that, perceptions of a procedural justice climate influenced an employee's likelihood to engage in victimizing behaviors towards others. Other researchers have similarly found that perceptions of procedural injustice are associated with victimizing behaviors (Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Tepper et al., 2006). Furthermore, researchers have found that perceptions of organizational sanctions against aggressive and threatening behaviors by employees significantly attenuated the likelihood of employees engaging in such behaviors (Dupre & Barling, 2006; Inness et al., 2008). Greenberg and Barling (1999) had also found that workplace surveillance was associated with reduced victimizing behaviors in the workplace. Finally, researchers have also found that perceptions of interactional injustice are associated with greater victimizing behaviors (Inness et al., 2005; Inness et al., 2008).

Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2007, p. 857) called for more research that investigates "organizational and cultural structures that enable, trigger, and reward bullying". Indeed, bullying can be stimulated by workgroups or organizations that normalize abusive, or even competitive, behavior (Coyne et al., 2003; Salin, 2003). It is important to acknowledge the role of organizational culture and its potential influence in stimulating workplace victimization.

Organizations characterized by strong power imbalances can create conditions conducive to workplace victimization and result in the institutionalization of such behaviors (Salin, 2003). Indeed, some organizations appear to permit, in some sense, workplace victimization "as the way things are done" (Salin, 2003, p. 1220). In a recent study, Bulutlar and Unler Oz (2009) investigated whether ethical climates stimulate

victimizing behaviors in organizations. Interestingly, their study found that organizations with instrumental ethical climates, which typically cause employees to act egoistically and in their own self-interests, are associated with increased victimization. Alternatively, they found that a caring ethical climate (i.e., one in which employees feel that caring behaviors towards one another are encouraged) and a rules ethical climate (i.e., one in which employees perceive that strict rules and policies must be adhered to) predicted lower levels of workplace victimization in organizations.

One interesting perspective that has been taken on workplace victimization is that some organizations may perceive it as being an efficient way of inducing performance (Salin, 2003). To illustrate, striving for excellence, without consideration of costs, may help workplace victimization become accepted in an organization (Salin, 2003). Indeed, certain organizational cultures may even encourage toughness from its employees (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Salin, 2003), which may provoke victimizing behaviors as a sign of this toughness. Furthermore, several researchers have asserted that workplace victimization can become an accepted and even encouraged part of such organizational cultures (Bulutlar & Unler Oz, 2009; Cowie et al., 2002; Harvey et al., 2009). Therefore, workplace victimization may in fact be perceived positively by senior management in some organizations.

From a critical perspective, Liefooghe and Davey (2001) argue that workplace victimization can be attributed to broader concepts of organizational power and control. They assert that managers do not have control over organizational practices that potentially cause victimizing behaviors and, as a result, are left as "scapegoats." In fact,

they argue that these organizational practices and the system as a whole, reward managers for enforcing them; in other words, the managers' own performance is also measured according to successful enforcement (Liefooghe & Davey, 2001). Furthermore, they argue that "the routine subjugation of employees by organizational practices may in itself be seen to constitute bullying" (Liefooghe & Davey, 2001, p. 378). From this perspective, the aggressor is the organization itself and its culture. They found that certain organizational practices, for example using statistics for performance measures, call handling times, and policies pertaining to sick time, were described by participants as bullying. These output-based measures and policies create a culture that fosters and encourages victimizing behaviors. Furthermore, the organizational culture of their sample was characterized as overly mechanistic, controlling, and dehumanized (Liefooghe & Davey, 2001). This suggests the presence of a work climate that is *impersonal.*

Outcomes of Workplace Victimization on Targets

Researchers have reported a number of consequences of workplace victimization for targets. These consequences can be categorized according to two broad types: work-related and health-related.

Work-Related Outcomes

In terms of work-related consequences, researchers have found that targets have lower job satisfaction (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007), absenteeism (Hoel & Cooper, 2000), intent to leave (Djurkovic et al., 2008), lower affective and continuance commitment (Tepper, 2000), and reduced work performance (Tepper et al., 2011) than non-targets.

Interestingly, Hershcovis and Barling (2010) found that aggression perpetrated by one's supervisor had the strongest adverse effects, in comparison to co-workers and outsiders, on attitudinal outcomes (job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intent) and work performance. Co-worker aggression was found to have stronger adverse effects on the target for these particular outcomes in comparison to outsider aggression (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010).

Workplace victimization can have adverse work-related outcomes for targets due to a number of reasons. Employees often view the organization as responsible for their well-being while at work (Hoel et al., 1999); thus, experiencing victimizing behaviors by other organizational members will tend to reduce their commitment to the organization while increasing their intent to leave (Djurkovic et al., 2008). Victimizing behaviors will also create perceptions of a hostile environment for employees (Bulutlar & Unler Oz, 2009), which can explain low job satisfaction, intent to leave, and absenteeism (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Finally, victimizing behaviors can distract targets from completing their work through emotional suffering, which can lead to reduced work performance (Vega & Comer, 2005). This, of course, suggests a critical need for organizations and human resource management practitioners to prevent victimizing behaviors in the workplace given the individual and organizational implications for performance.

Health-Related Outcomes

Researchers have also found a number of health-related consequences for targets of victimizing behaviors. These health-related consequences include decreased psychological and physical well-being (Bowling & Beehr, 2006), increased depression

and anxiety (Cortina et al., 2001; Haines et al., 2006), posttraumatic stress (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004), poor mental health (Rogers & Kelloway, 1997), reduced emotional well-being (LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002), increased emotional exhaustion (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey et al., 2007), and lower life satisfaction (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Hence, the consequences of victimizing behaviors for targets' health also tend to spill over to their personal life (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Since work constitutes a significant part of an individual's life, the effects on individuals' personal well-being is perhaps not surprising. Interestingly, in Hershcovis and Barling's (2010) meta-analysis of work and health-related outcomes, they found that the perpetrator source (supervisor, co-worker, or outsider) was not significantly related to targets' health outcomes. In other words, the consequences of victimizing behaviors for targets' health are unrelated to the hierarchical status/source of the perpetrator.

A further understanding of the consequences of victimizing behaviors for targets' health is important particularly because of the wide ranging effects on the target that extend beyond the workplace. While a number of health-related consequences have been reported using meta-analyses (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010), it would be interesting to examine the effects of workplace victimization on targets' general health using a representative sample of a general population. This would provide increased evidence of the detrimental effects of victimizing behaviors for targets.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES

A number of researchers have contended that theory in the field of workplace victimization is under-developed (e.g., Baillien et al., 2009; Parzefall & Salin, 2010). This has been partially to blame for some of the inconclusive and conflicting findings (Aquino & Thau, 2009). While a few theories have been applied to workplace victimization such as social learning theory (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998), social exchange theory (Parzefall & Salin, 2010), social interactionism perspective (Einarsen et al., 1994), and victim precipitation theory (Tepper et al., 2006), these theories only partially explain why victimization in the workplace occurs. For example, social learning theory has been drawn upon to suggest that employees will model and imitate victimizing behaviors when observing others engage in them (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). Social exchange theory has been drawn upon to suggest that employees who experience victimizing behaviors will reciprocate with such behaviors onto the perpetrator (Parzefall & Salin, 2010). Finally, social interactionism has been used to suggest that the social environment in an organization can explain why employees are targeted (Hoel et al., 1999).

As mentioned earlier, researchers have suggested two target types: the vulnerable and the provocative (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). The vulnerable target is a particularly interesting type because of the implication that the perpetrator advantageously or opportunistically victimizes without active provocation from the target. None of the three theories described above – social learning theory, social interactionism perspective, and social exchange theory – explain how and why employees who are seen as vulnerable

will more likely be targeted. Indeed, there is a particularly limited understanding of why vulnerable employees are targeted. Victim precipitation theory, in contrast, has been widely used and provides some explanation for why vulnerable targets are likely to be subjected to victimizing behaviors.

Victim Precipitation Theory

Victim precipitation theory suggests that targets with characteristics that make them either vulnerable or provocative will be more likely to elicit victimizing behaviors from others (Aquino, 2000; Wolfgang, 1958). Victim precipitation theory has been used to explain both target types. To illustrate, victim precipitation theory suggests that certain provocative behaviors (e.g., aggressiveness) can elicit victimizing behaviors from others; hence, explaining the provocative target type. Similarly, researchers have used victim precipitation theory to suggest that certain characteristics that make an employee appear vulnerable will elicit victimizing behaviors from others (Aquino, 2000). Victim precipitation theory was borrowed from the criminology literature in which it is often used to suggest that individuals may provoke victimizing behaviors through actions (verbal abuse) or even clothing (date rape) (Wolfgang, 1958). In this case, clothing may signal a sense of vulnerability to potential perpetrators in the context of date rape.

In the workplace context, researchers have tested role ambiguity as a characteristic that predicts the precipitation of victimizing behaviors (e.g., Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Notelaers et al., 2010). Applying victim precipitation theory, employees who have high levels of role ambiguity will experience greater levels of

confusion about the set of expectations that cover their role. This confusion is suggested to increase the target's vulnerability to victimizing acts from others. Therefore, victim precipitation theory would suggest that role ambiguity as a characteristic will tend to elicit victimizing behaviors from others.

A limitation of victim precipitation theory is that it explains victimization by solely examining employee characteristics that appear to make one vulnerable. Moreover, there is a wide range of characteristics that can be included within the victim precipitation theory framework since the theory covers those who precipitate victimizing behaviors through vulnerability as well as through provocation (see Aquino, 2000). This wide application sacrifices precise explanation for why these characteristics precipitate victimizing behaviors. For example, it begs the question of why greater confusion about one's role actually makes one more vulnerable and how this translates into drawing victimizing behaviors from others at work. A second limitation is that the broader context is largely overlooked (Hoel et al., 1999). While employee characteristics may indeed play a telling role in explaining victimization events, it is also important to understand the context in which the victimizing behaviors occur (Bulutlar & Unler Oz, 2009). In particular, it is important to explore how employees perceive these contextual factors (Inness et al., 2008). Indeed, how one perceives his/her context can have powerful effects on informing and shaping individual behaviors (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977; Bhave et al., 2010).

Insights from learned helplessness theory can help explain why a vulnerable employee may likely experience increased victimization at work. First, the learned

helplessness theory framework elucidates how feelings of helplessness manifest through passive and maladaptive behavior at work (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). This provides an explanation for how and why the experience of confusion may translate into becoming a target of victimizing behaviors. Second, the learned helplessness theory framework includes both individual predictors of helplessness and contextual predictors of helplessness such as support and the work climate (Seligman, 1975). Notably, the learned helplessness theory framework also elucidates the consequences of helplessness on one's general health. Interestingly, few studies have sought to explore workplace victimization through theoretical insights from learned helplessness theory. Indeed, the vulnerable target may also be referred to as submissive or helpless (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004), which points to the relevance of learned helplessness theory as a framework for understanding the vulnerable target.

Learned Helplessness Theory

Learned helplessness theory is a prominent theory in the field of psychology that suggests that individuals who feel that they have little control over the outcome of events will experience a sense of helplessness (Seligman, 1975). Moreover, individuals learn to remain helpless when they feel that they have little control over their outcomes (Abramson et al., 1978). In early conceptualizations and tests of the framework, researchers used laboratory studies to find that overly complex training and problem-solving tasks can induce helplessness in individuals, which resulted in performance deficits (e.g., Hiroto & Seligman, 1975; Miller & Seligman, 1975).

Martinko and Gardner (1982) explored key factors that they theorized would induce helplessness including the nature of the work, leadership and supervision, and organizational structure and policies. When describing the latter, Martinko and Gardner (1982) discuss the role of a bureaucratic work environment with highly centralized and rigid rules, which can induce feelings of helplessness through its impersonal nature. Moreover, they took an attributional perspective in their theoretical exploration. Hence, in this context it is appropriate to explore how the *perceptions* of 1) the nature of work (I use role ambiguity), 2) leadership support, and 3) an impersonal work climate may explain victimization in the workplace.

Another feature of learned helplessness theory is that feelings of helplessness result in poor health outcomes for the individual (Seligman, 1975). This feature has been rooted from studies that have illustrated individuals' maladaptive responses to negative situations when they feel helpless (see Martinko & Gardner, 1982; Peterson et al., 1993). When individuals repeatedly experience negative situations that cause feelings of helplessness, the harm that these situations induce on them will adversely affect their general levels of health (Seligman, 1975).

For measurement issues related to learned helplessness theory, researchers have contended that learned helplessness is a theoretical construct and not a variable that is conducive to operationalization (Peterson et al., 1993). Moreover, Peterson et al. (1993, p. 115) state, "we suggest that notions like expectations reside more in our theories than literally in our subjects". They further state, "The methodological implication of regarding helplessness constructs as hypothetical abstractions is that their meaning is not

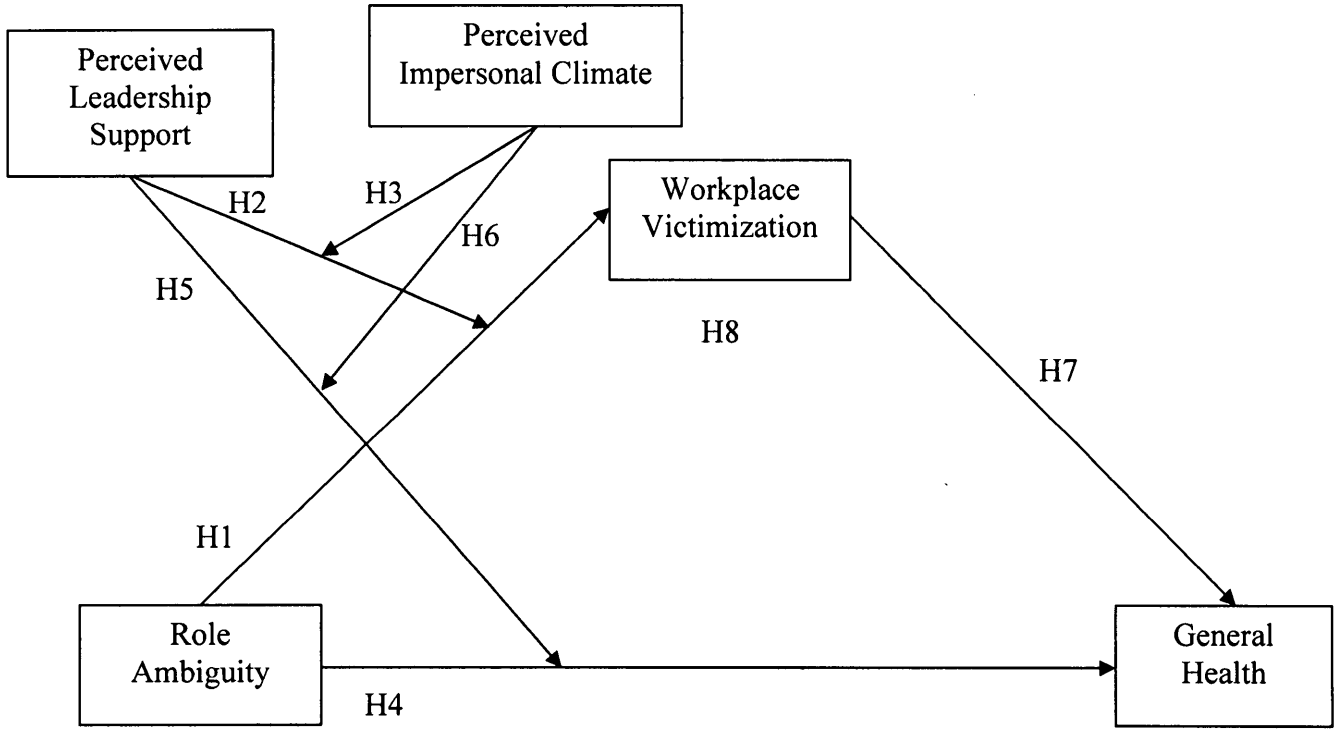
exhausted by any single operation" (Peterson et al., 1993, p. 115). Researchers have attempted to measure helplessness directly by asking whether respondents feel helpless, if respondents believe there is a relationship between responses and outcomes, and about respondents' expectations regarding future events, but this has produced mixed findings (see Peterson et al., 1993). In their review, Peterson et al. (1993) contend that this is due to the psychological, and often unconscious, nature of helplessness, which does not lend itself to operationalization through self-reports about expectations and feelings of helplessness. Indeed, individuals who feel helpless may often deny helplessness as a way of coping with feelings of helplessness (Peterson et al., 1993). Consistent with these recommendations, I use insights from learned helplessness theory as theoretical explanations that guide the conceptual framework tested. In particular, I use these theoretical explanations to elucidate how and why employees who experience role ambiguity, low perceived leadership support, and an impersonal climate become more likely to experience workplace victimization since prior theory and research have suggested these factors as central to feelings of helplessness (Martinko & Gardner, 1982; Peterson et al., 1993; Seligman, 1975). This adds insights to victim precipitation theory, which suggests that employees who appear vulnerable will more likely be victimized in the workplace.

Based on theoretical explanations and insights from learned helplessness theory and victim precipitation theory, I predict that role ambiguity will be related to workplace victimization and general health. I further predict that perceived leadership support will moderate these two relationships, while this moderated relationship will vary along an

employee's perceptions of the extent to which his/her work climate is impersonal. Workplace victimization will mediate the relationship between role ambiguity and general health, while this mediated relationship will vary along perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate. The conceptual model below (see Figure 1) depicts the relationships described. I first discuss the potential effects of role ambiguity on workplace victimization, followed by the relationships captured by H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, and H7, respectively.

FIGURE 1

A Mediated Moderation Model of Workplace Victimization



Role Ambiguity and Workplace Victimization

As discussed earlier, meta-analytic research has revealed that role ambiguity is positively related to being victimized in the workplace (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). However, there has been little theoretical explanation elucidating why experiences of role ambiguity may be associated with a greater likelihood of being subjected to victimizing behaviors by others. In this sub-section, I will discuss the construct of role ambiguity and explain how an individual's feelings of role ambiguity can precipitate victimizing behaviors from others. I draw insights from both the learned helpless theory and victim precipitation theory frameworks.

Role ambiguity refers to an individual's expectations surrounding his/her role (Tubre & Collins, 2000). When individuals believe that they have an unclear understanding about the set of expectations that surround their role, they experience high role ambiguity (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Expectations about one's role do not only refer to work tasks, but also the set of expected behaviors that the employee should be engaging in (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Interestingly, Jackson and Schuler (1985) found that individuals' perceptions of role ambiguity was highly correlated with self-rated performance, but weakly related to other and objective reports of performance. This suggests that the consequences of high role ambiguity can be psychological. In other words, individuals who experience high role ambiguity begin to perceive that their performance also suffers as a result (Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

Extending these findings, employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity may likely feel that their efforts are unrelated to their work outcomes and

performance. This is because employees who experience high role ambiguity are unclear about the expectations surrounding their role, which include their duties, responsibilities, goals, and objectives (Tubre & Collins, 2000). Indeed, Kahn et al. (1964) originally defined a feature of role ambiguity as the unpredictability about the outcomes related to role performance. Extending this, Beehr and Bhagat (1985) suggested that role ambiguity is associated with two important forms of uncertainty: effort to performance and performance to outcome.

To explain, if individuals are uncertain about their duties and responsibilities, they will also likely be uncertain about how they should perform their work and whether their efforts will result in performance. Since role ambiguity entails a lack of clarity about one's duties and responsibilities, and goals and objectives, which suggest uncertainty about how he/she is supposed to perform his/her work (Yun et al., 2007), employees who experience high role ambiguity will likely feel little control over their work outcomes (Kahn et al., 1964). This supports work by Beehr and Bhagat (1985) suggesting that role ambiguity clouds the perceived effort to performance and performance to outcome relationships.

The arguments above suggest that the potential for feelings of helplessness may exist when employees experience role ambiguity. This is because employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity may come to feel helpless in their work role. Helplessness occurs through three types of deficits: motivational, cognitive, and emotional (Seligman, 1975). Research has revealed that role ambiguity is also related to decreased task motivation (Dierdorff & Rubin, 2007; Tubre & Collins, 2000), decreased

performance (i.e., cognitive) (Gilboa et al., 2008), and increased tension and anxiety (i.e., emotional) (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983). Therefore, the outcomes of role ambiguity mirror the deficits expected to occur within the learned helplessness theoretical framework.

When role ambiguity results in employees feeling a sense of helplessness, this can make them appear more vulnerable to others in their workplace. To illustrate, employees who are not clear about the set of expectations surrounding their role will likely appear less confident when performing their tasks, responsibilities, and everyday work requirements. In particular, Martinko and Gardner (1982) argued that employees who experience confusion related to the nature of their work role, which role ambiguity is intended to capture (Tubre & Collins, 2000), will exhibit less confidence in performing their work. This uncertainty, lack of clarity, and lack of confidence about their work role, and the set of expectations that govern it (Tubre & Collins, 2000), will tend to manifest in their exchanges with others, such as co-workers and supervisors (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). For instance, employees or supervisors may find it easy to place blame for issues or problems that arise within the work team on the employee who feels confused about his/her work role.

When blame can more easily be placed on an employee, this may precipitate victimizing behaviors from the supervisor or other team members (Aquino, 2000). In addition, employees who feel uncertain about their work will find it increasingly difficult to defend themselves against others. This is because the employee may be uncertain about whether work problems that are experienced are indeed his/her fault, particularly since he/she is unclear about the expectations that surround his/her role (Tubre & Collins,

2000) and tend to perceive their performance to be lower (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). In other words, this explanation is consistent with findings that reveal that employees who experience feelings of helplessness tend to rate themselves lower on work performance than objective measures of performance (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Such factors make the employee an easy target for others to victimize (Tepper et al., 2006).

Conceptually blending victim precipitation theory with learned helplessness theory, the former theory adds that targets who appear vulnerable will tend to precipitate victimizing behaviors from others. Moreover, researchers have used victim precipitation theory to contend that employees who appear vulnerable will be perceived by others as safe to target because such employees appear less likely to defend themselves (Tepper et al., 2006). Therefore, employees who experience high role ambiguity will appear vulnerable to others in the organization, which will likely elicit more frequent victimizing behaviors because they will be perceived to be safe to target and unlikely to defend themselves.

H1: Role ambiguity will be positively associated with workplace victimization.

Role Ambiguity and Workplace Victimization: The Moderating Role of Perceived Leadership Support

Role ambiguity is theorized above as a predictor of victimization because of the increased likelihood that employees feel a lack of clarity and confidence about their work and role expectations, which suggest feelings of low control over their outcomes. Despite the potential for employees to feel helpless based on feelings of role ambiguity, I believe

that role ambiguity alone may not necessarily be sufficient to trigger passivity, helplessness, and vulnerability on the part of the employee. While meta-analytic (Bowling & Beehr, 2006) and literature (Aquino & Thau, 2009) reviews have indeed shown a positive relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization, a more recent study by Hauge et al. (2011) found that role ambiguity is not significantly related to workplace victimization when controlling for perceived supervisor support. Moreover, this is an interesting finding since perceived supervisor support has received very little attention in the meta-analytic and literature reviews cited earlier.

Hauge et al.'s (2011) study cannot be considered conclusive, however, because it does contain some potential methodological problems. More specifically, the authors used a single dichotomous item to measure victimization, which was the dependent variable. Their results also suggest a potential moderating influence of perceived supervisor support, which was not explored. Given the findings from prior meta-analytic reviews, Hauge et al.'s (2011) surprising results which contradict these prior meta-analytic reviews, and the methodological issues contained in Hauge et al.'s (2011) study, there is a need for further investigation. In particular, since role ambiguity has most often been reported as significantly related to workplace victimization, I examine whether there is perhaps an interaction effect between role ambiguity and perceived support from leaders in explaining employee reports of workplace victimization.

Aquino and Thau (2009) argue that researchers have often tended to report mixed findings about characteristics that entail employee vulnerability. This is because researchers may not be capturing the key situational factors that increase the visibility (or

salience) of targets' characteristics of vulnerability (Aquino & Thau, 2009). This also suggests a potential caution towards prior meta-analytic reviews that pool together the results from various studies of the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization. This is because the majority of research that has investigated the role ambiguity-workplace victimization relationship was measured without sufficient and simultaneous consideration of the situational factors that also tend to be present within organizations (Aquino & Thau, 2009). Interestingly, Aquino and Thau (2009) state that "perhaps one reason for the inconsistent findings is that markers of vulnerability may not always be salient to perpetrators...if so, then situational factors that heighten the salience of such markers may also *increase* an employee's risk of victimization" (emphasis added) (2009: p. 733). To this I add that situational factors may also *decrease* an employee's risk of experiencing victimization when these factors provide support to employees.

In the context of feelings of role ambiguity, which as I mentioned earlier entail confusion and a lack of certainty about one's role expectations, it is reasonable to presume that employees may likely turn towards their leaders for support. In other words, when employees experience ambiguity and a lack of clarity about their work, they will likely seek support from leaders in the organization (Amabile et al., 2004). As mentioned earlier, I conceptualize and test leadership as a combination of both the employee's supervisor/line manager and other managers in the organization (Amabile et al., 2004). In many work situations, the direct supervisor may not represent the only source of managerial support (Amabile et al., 2004); thus, I theorize and capture the employee's leaders more broadly (i.e., including both supervisor/line manager and other leaders)

(Howell & Shamir, 2005). Indeed, Martinko and Gardner (1982) also conceptualized supervisor and leader support.

When employees who experience role ambiguity perceive that their leaders are not supportive, this can increase their feelings of helplessness (Landsbergis & Vivona-Vaughan, 1995). Hence, employees who feel helpless due to the nature of their work and role expectations will feel even more helpless when leaders are not perceived to be demonstrating support towards them. Alternatively, employees may feel less helpless when they perceive that their leaders support them. I investigate whether perceived leadership support plays a moderating role in the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization.

Hence, employees' feelings of helplessness can be exacerbated when they perceive little support from their leadership. Researchers have suggested that employees who feel little control over their outcomes at work will feel increasingly helpless when organizational leadership does not demonstrate support towards them (Amabile et al., 2004). Researchers have also found that perceived leadership support is related to the three deficits posited within the learned helplessness theory framework (motivational, cognitive, and emotional). More specifically, low levels of perceived leadership support is related to decreased motivation (e.g., Facteau et al., 1995), decreased in-role performance (i.e. cognitive) (e.g., Chan, 2006; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006), and increased tension and anxiety (i.e., emotional) (e.g., Kirmeyer & Dougherty, 1988).

Through a lack of perceived support from organizational leaders, employees who feel helpless may become passive, numb, and engage in maladaptive behavior (Martinko

& Gardner, 1982). Passiveness and maladaptive behavior can often be noticed and apparent to others in the workplace such as the supervisor and co-workers (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). Peterson and Seligman (1983) have also suggested that employees who feel helpless tend to become passive and numb. Therefore, these researchers suggest the potential for others in the organization to recognize increased levels of vulnerability in an employee who feels helpless.

In contrast, when employees perceive high levels of leadership support, such perceptions can attenuate feelings of helplessness that are rooted in their role. To illustrate, employees who feel that they have little control over their work outcomes will feel less helpless when they believe that their leaders will guide and support them through the work process. Despite feelings of confusion about what is expected from them, perceptions of leader support can provide employees with some level of comfort that their leaders will protect them from negative consequences.

Victim precipitation theory, when blended with learned helplessness theory, can dually explain an employee's increased likelihood of victimization. Victim precipitation theory suggests that employees' vulnerability will elicit and draw victimizing behaviors from others (Aquino & Bradfield, 2000). This is because vulnerable employees will be perceived as safe to target and unlikely to defend themselves against others (Tepper et al., 2006). While low levels of perceived leadership support may exacerbate any feelings of helplessness that an employee experiences, high levels of perceived leadership support may attenuate, and even suppress, feelings of helplessness because employees perceive that their leaders support them in their ambiguous work situation. Therefore, when

employees experience high role ambiguity and perceive high levels of support from leaders, they will be less likely to experience and report victimizing behaviors.

> *H2: Perceived leadership support will moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and victimization, whereby high levels (rather than low levels) of perceived leadership support will be associated with decreased victimization for employees with high role ambiguity.*

Role Ambiguity, Perceived Leadership Support, and Perceived Impersonal Work Climate: A Three-Way Interaction Explaining Workplace Victimization

Perceived leadership support was theorized above as a situational marker of vulnerability for employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity. While role ambiguity reflects perceptions about one's own role and perceived leadership support reflects perceptions about the supportiveness of one's leaders, studies have shown that perceptions of one's work environment more broadly can also signal perceptions of support (or lack thereof) to employees (Geddes & Stickney, 2011). Hence, it may be possible that perceptions of a supportive work climate more broadly can attenuate the effects of high role ambiguity and low perceived leadership support. Conversely, an unsupportive climate, which I label a perceived 'impersonal work climate', may increase the likelihood of experiencing workplace victimization even when employees who experience high role ambiguity perceive that their leaders are supportive. It is these latter effects that I investigate more closely.

Studies investigating the effects of psychological climate on workplace victimization have been sparse. Nevertheless, a few exceptions can be noted. First, Bulutlar and Unler Oz (2009) tested the relationship between perceptions of different ethical climate types and bullying behaviors. In this study, they found that employees who had low perceptions of a caring ethical climate were more likely to be subjected to bullying behaviors. The authors, however, did not specifically theorize why employees who perceived that the ethical climate in their organization is not caring would be bullied more. A few studies have also measured the relationship between perceptions of a procedural justice climate and victimizing behaviors (e.g., Aquino et al., 2006; Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Tepper et al., 2006). These studies found that when employees perceived low levels of a procedural justice climate, victimizing behaviors were more likely to occur.

In this study, I sought to explore the effects of a perceived impersonal work climate on victimizing behaviors. More specifically, I investigated how perceptions of an impersonal work climate can influence the likelihood of employees who have high role ambiguity and perceive high leadership support to experience increased victimization. As mentioned earlier, employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity will feel less control over their work outcomes due to a lack of clarity about their tasks and responsibilities. However, high perceived leadership support is hypothesized to attenuate the effects of role ambiguity on their likelihood of experiencing workplace victimization. Perceptions of the work climate in this study reflect views about how individuals are treated at work and whether individual needs are considered important to the

organization. Since Martinko and Gardner's (1982) model emphasized the role of a work climate that appears impersonal to employees, I specifically investigated perceptions of an impersonal work climate.

Perceptions of work climate are important because employees are immersed in the work climate throughout the work day. While employees may attempt to avoid and escape unsupportive leaders for parts of their work day, a work climate tends to be all-encompassing within the organization (Geddes & Stickney, 2011). In other words, if an employee works in an organization in which employees are not treated as individuals, this climate will tend to manifest itself regularly through exchanges with co-workers, the type of work delegated, set of expectations, and so on (Liefooghe & Davey, 2001).

A climate that is perceived to be characterized by a lack of support towards employees may increase feelings of helplessness because the employee's everyday experiences will constantly remind him/her of this lack of support (Wright, 2005). Hence, even when employees who experience high role ambiguity perceive high levels of leadership support, they may nonetheless become increasingly vulnerable when they perceive that the work climate is impersonal. This would suggest that the work climate may play an important role beyond perceptions of supervisor and leader support. Hence, while supportive supervisors and leaders can make an important difference, the work climate may also be accountable for employee experiences of workplace victimization (Dozier, 1998). As mentioned, when employees feel that they are unsupported, these feelings can manifest through passive and maladaptive behavior (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). Other employees who notice this behavior of the potential target may tend to

perceive him/her as one who is safe to target (Tepper et al., 2006). Victim precipitation theory suggests that employees who are perceived to be helpless, safe to target, and unlikely to defend themselves will elicit and precipitate victimizing behaviors from others (Aquino, 2000; Aquino & Barfield, 2000). Therefore, I predict a three-way interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and a perceived impersonal work climate on experiencing victimizing behaviors, whereby the moderated relationship between role ambiguity and perceived leadership support will vary across perceived impersonal work climate.

> *H3: There will be a three-way interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceived impersonal work climate. Employees who experience high role ambiguity and perceive high levels of leadership support will be more likely to experience victimizing behaviors when they have perceptions of an impersonal climate (relative to perceptions of a work climate that is not impersonal).*

Role Ambiguity and General Health

Role ambiguity may likely have negative consequences for employee general health (Abramson et al., 1978; Carlson & Kacmar, 1994). As mentioned, role ambiguity refers to an employee's confusion about his/her role requirements and the set of expectations surrounding his/her work role (Tubre & Collins, 2000). When an employee does not understand his/her role requirements and the set of expectations around his/her role, he/she will tend to experience increased levels of stress, anxiety, and tension (Bauer

& Truxillo, 2000; Beehr & Newman, 1978; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1995). Researchers have argued that this is due to the constant uncertainty associated with being unclear about whether he/she is doing what is expected of him/her and tension about the resulting work outcomes (e.g., Beehr & Newman, 1978; Kelloway & Barling, 1991). As mentioned earlier, feelings of role ambiguity cloud the effort to performance and performance to outcome relationship (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985). In other words, this increases unpredictability about the potential work outcomes related to performance (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994).

Based on insights from learned helplessness theory, individuals who feel that they have a lack of control over their outcomes will experience a sense of helplessness, which leads to poorer general health (Seligman, 1975). Hence, a feature of the theory is that feelings of helplessness will tend to have detrimental outcomes for the individual's health (Seligman, 1975). This suggests that employees who feel helplessness at work due to a lack of clarity about role requirements and expectations surrounding their work role (i.e., feelings of role ambiguity) may also have poorer health outcomes than those who do not experience such ambiguity. To explain, when employees are unclear about their tasks and responsibility, how to go about performing their job, and what is expected of them at work, this can increase their tension and worries about possible punishments if work outcomes are poor (Frone et al., 1995). Tensions and worries arising from work can be particularly detrimental, since employees spend a significant amount of their day and week at work. Therefore:

H4: Role ambiguity will be negatively associated with general health.

Role Ambiguity and General Health: The Moderating Role of Perceived Leadership Support

When employees experience role ambiguity they will tend to experience negative health-related consequences because of increased tension, stress, and emotional harm (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Interestingly, however, a meta-analysis found that the relationship between role ambiguity and health are most typically influenced by moderating variables (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). I believe that perceived leadership support can play a telling role. Hence, the relationship between role ambiguity and general health may be further explained by perceptions of leadership support. When employees who have high role ambiguity believe that they have high levels of support from their leadership, this can attenuate the negative effects on their health-related outcomes. Because leaders are perceived to be responsible for overseeing employees' duties and performance in the organization, employees will look towards their leaders in situations of uncertainty and ambiguity (Keller, 1989).

A key theory that points towards the importance of leaders in supporting employees, particularly when the latter experience uncertainty related to their role requirements and expectations, is path-goal theory (House & Mitchell, 1974). As O'Driscoll and Beehr contend when describing this theory, "The role of the leader is to clarify the means by which individuals achieve work-related goals" (1994: p. 142). In other words, path-goal theory suggests that leaders have an important responsibility to clear employees' perceived path towards achieving their work goals. While it is difficult

to pinpoint specific behaviors that leaders should engage in to help clear this perceived path for employees (Keller, 1989), general demonstrations of support by leaders towards the employee will tend to instill greater confidence that the leader will provide guidance and support when (or if) the employee experiences challenges (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). Therefore, employees who perceive high levels of leadership support will have better health outcomes through less stress, anxiety, and tension than those who perceive low levels of leadership support.

In contrast, employees who experience high role ambiguity and perceive that they have little support from organizational leadership will likely experience increased psychological and emotional harm. This is because employees who experience role ambiguity will feel greater helplessness since those who are believed to be in positions to offer support – their leaders in the organization – will be perceived to be unsupportive.

When employees experience feelings of helplessness, they may attempt to avoid the situation that is prompting the helplessness (Martinko & Gardner, 1982); however, employees typically need to consult and meet with organizational leaders on a regular basis. This makes it increasingly difficult for employees to resist any feelings of helplessness, which can accelerate the negative consequences for health (Seligman, 1975). Hence, leaders play an important role in supporting employees so that they minimize any feelings of helplessness experienced by the employee. As mentioned earlier, a feature of learned helplessness theory is that employees who experience feelings of helplessness will suffer negative health-related consequences as a result (Abramson et al., 1978). Hence, the level of general health of employees who experience high levels of

role ambiguity will likely be better for those who perceive high levels of support from their leaders relative to those who perceive low levels of support.

> *H5: Perceived leadership support will moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and general health, whereby high levels (relative to low levels) of perceived leadership support will be associated with better general health for employees with high role ambiguity.*

Role Ambiguity, Perceived Leadership Support, and Perceived Impersonal Climate: A Three-Way Interaction Explaining General Health

Psychological work climate variables are important to consider in organizational research because they represent employees' perceptions about their work climate, which they are surrounded by throughout the work day (Geddes & Stickney, 2011). In other words, employees' perceptions about their work climate can have a particularly important effect on their emotions because of the all-encompassing nature of a work climate. While employees can try to avoid leaders who appear unsupportive – although as I mention earlier this is nonetheless difficult to do for long durations of time – employees cannot escape a work climate unless they leave the organization (Inness et al., 2008; Salin, 2003). The psychological work climate then has important implications for employee emotions, which affect their general health. Similar to workplace victimization as the dependent variable, I predict that a perceived impersonal work climate (relative to a work climate that is not perceived to be impersonal) will result in negative effects on general

health for employees who experience high role ambiguity despite perceiving high levels of leadership support.

High levels of role ambiguity cloud the effort to performance and performance to outcome link because of a lack of clarity about role requirements and role expectations (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985). Employee perceptions of high leadership support can attenuate the negative effects of role ambiguity on general health. As argued earlier, however, perceptions of leadership support represent one factor, while the work climate represents another. Hence, employee perceptions of work climate will also be accountable for explaining an employee's general health beyond their perceptions of leadership support. A work climate that is perceived to be impersonal will tend to signal low levels of support for the employee even when the employee's supervisor and leaders may appear supportive. Employees may feel helpless in the sense that their supportive leader may have limited control within the broader context. Therefore, even when employees who experience high role ambiguity perceive that their leaders are supportive, their perceptions of an impersonal work climate (rather than a work climate that is not perceived to be impersonal) will have negative effects on their general health.

> *H6: There will be a three-way interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceived impersonal work climate. Employees who experience high role ambiguity and perceive high levels of leadership support will be more likely to have poorer general health when they have perceptions of an impersonal climate (relative to perceptions of a work climate that is not impersonal).*

Workplace Victimization and General Health

There have been a number of studies that have revealed the negative health-related consequences of workplace victimization for targets (see Aquino & Thau, 2009; Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Workplace victimization tends to cause emotional and psychological harm for targets (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). For instance, researchers have found that employees who are subjected to victimizing behaviors suffer reduced well-being (Lapierre, Spector, & Leck, 2005), increased stress (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Budd et al., 1996; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007; Tepper et al., 2007), and a lower self-image (Vega & Comer, 2005). Psychological and somatic health problems and post-traumatic stress have represented strong foci in the victimization literature (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Duffy et al., 2002; Nielsen et al., 2008). More specifically, researchers have found that being subjected to victimizing behaviors can result in increased depression, sleep difficulties, and fatigue (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004; Tepper, 2000)

These psychological and emotional consequences of workplace victimization can be caused by a constant questioning by the target of why he/she is being subjected to victimizing behaviors and fearing when he/she will be victimized again (Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007). Employees also desire a sense of belonging with others and victimizing acts from co-workers can threaten this (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004). Finally, employees will also tend to suffer psychological and emotional consequences because being picked on can imply to the target low power and embarrassment in front of others (Bowling & Beehr, 2006).

Workplace victimization can also result in feelings of helplessness (Harvey et al., 2006). Employees who are subjected to victimizing behaviors begin to feel less control over their own outcomes and fearful of when the perpetrator will strike next (Harvey et al., 2006). The more frequent that these victimizing behaviors are, the more helpless the target may feel because of reduced hope that the situation will improve (Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007). In other words, when employees are frequently experiencing victimizing behaviors they will tend to have less hope that these behaviors will cease to continue (Einarsen et al., 2011). This will tend to result in greater psychological and emotional harm for the target (Vega & Comer, 2005).

H7: Workplace victimization will be negatively associated with general health.

A Mediated-Moderation Relationship

The mediated-moderation relationship that is hypothesized predicts that the mediating relationship between role ambiguity, workplace victimization, and general health will vary across two moderators: perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate. In other words, workplace victimization will mediate the relationship between role ambiguity and general health at certain levels of perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate. When examining the mediating effect across both moderator variables (perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate), the mediating relationship is predicted to be significant when there are 1) low levels of perceived leadership support and high levels of

perceived impersonal work climate, and 2) high levels of perceived leadership support and low levels of perceived impersonal work climate.

When there are low levels of perceived leadership support and high levels of perceived impersonal work climate, individuals who experience high levels of role ambiguity will be more likely to be subjected to victimizing behaviors, which will result in poorer levels of general health. As theorized according to insights from learned helplessness theory, individuals who experience high role ambiguity, perceive that their leaders are unsupportive, and perceive that the work climate is impersonal will tend to experience feelings of helplessness. Being victimized in the workplace can further exacerbate feelings of helplessness (Harvey et al., 2006). Moreover, those who feel helpless experience adverse health-related consequences (Seligman, 1975). Therefore, this should translate into poorer health-related outcomes for targets who experience victimization (Abramson et al., 1978; Harvey et al., 2006), while employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity will be more likely to experience victimization when they perceive little support from their leaders and an impersonal work climate.

In contrast, when employees perceive high levels of leadership support and low levels of an impersonal work climate they will become less likely to be victimized. Perceptions of high leadership support can attenuate feelings of helplessness for employees who experience high role ambiguity. This is because despite an employee's lack of clarity about the effort to performance and performance to outcomes relationship (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985), his/her ability to rely on the support of his/her leaders can provide some level of comfort. Moreover, when the work climate is not perceived to be

impersonal and uncaring, employees may also feel that they can rely on others within the workplace to help and support them, since the work climate will more likely espouse such values.

In such cases, employees may be less likely to shows signs of passiveness, numbness, and maladaptive behavior (Martinko & Gardner, 1982), which would make any feelings of helplessness rooted in their role ambiguity less apparent and noticeable to others. If others are less able to notice vulnerable aspects of the target such as helplessness, the target will be less likely to elicit and precipitate victimizing behaviors from others (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). In other words, potential perpetrators will be less able to assess the likelihood and ability of the potential target experiencing role ambiguity to defend him/herself; thus, making it less "safe" to target that particular employee (Tepper et al., 2006).

Therefore, the mediated-moderation relationship will follow two general patterns. First, employees who experience high role ambiguity will be more likely to be subjected to victimizing behaviors when they perceive low leadership support and perceive an impersonal work climate. These victimizing behaviors will lead to poor general health outcomes. Second, employees who experience high role ambiguity will be less likely to be subjected to victimizing behaviors when they report high perceived leadership support and low perceived impersonal work climate. With lower levels of victimization experienced due to high perceived support from their leaders and work climate, employees who feel that they have high levels of role ambiguity will have better health outcomes than the first general pattern of employees.

H8a: There will be a mediated-moderation relationship between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, perceived impersonal work climate, workplace victimization, and general health. Employees who experience high role ambiguity will be more likely to experience victimizing behaviors when they have low perceived leadership support and high perceived impersonal work climate, which will be associated with poorer general health.

H8b: There will be a mediated-moderation relationship between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, perceived impersonal work climate, workplace victimization, and general health. Employees who experience high role ambiguity will be less likely to experience victimizing behaviors when they have high perceived leadership support and low perceived impersonal work climate, which will be associated with better general health.

CHAPTER 4: METHOD

Data Collection Procedures and Sample

Data were collected in 2008 through a survey commissioned by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) in the UK. The survey, named "The Fair Treatment at Work Survey", was designed to explore employee perceptions about their treatment in the workplace. I will provide a summary of the data collection procedures in this section (for a full report, see Fevre, Nichols, Prior, & Rutherford, 2009). The research design was based on a multi-stage random probability design. More specifically, the sample was selected by the BERR based on its representativeness of the general population in the UK.

The population in England was stratified into nine strata based on government office region and were sampled in proportion to their respective employee population. Within each stratum, the population was further stratified by the proportion of non-manual workers. The sample size in each stratum was further divided by the planned cluster size in order to identify the amount of sample points required within each stratum. Sampling intervals were then determined by selecting a random number and selecting sample points based on successive additions of this number. The method allowed primary sample units to be selected randomly, while in proportion to the relative population size and percentage of non-manual workers.

Only those who are currently in paid work or who have been in paid work for the past two years were eligible to complete the survey. This excluded self-employed individuals. Interviewers visited each household for survey completion and to ensure that

respondents met the eligibility criteria. If eligible individuals were not at home or unable to interview at that time, they were asked to phone the interviewer's office to complete the interview. A letter introducing the survey, stressing its importance towards improving workplace practices and policies, and assuring the full confidentiality of the responses was sent to each sampled address a month in advance of the visit. Interviewers also carried copies with them when visiting the addresses. Interviewers were required to attempt to contact each sampled address at least six times. Contact timings varied by day of week, time of day, and at least two contact attempts were required on a weekend and one required in the evening. Contact attempts were also required to vary across a three week period.

The survey fieldwork was completed over four months (September to December 2008). Interviews averaged about 45 minutes. All interviewers were trained and briefed prior to their fieldwork. Participants were also asked whether they would like to complete a questionnaire. The independent and dependent variables in this study were gathered through the self-completion questionnaire. Respondents who agreed to complete the self-completion questionnaire were provided with a gift card worth five British pounds and an envelope with postage paid in order to return the questionnaire.

Based on the initial screening of 6,995 potential respondents, 4,010 individuals completed the interview, representing a 57 percent response rate. Moreover, of the 3,608 individuals who consented to complete a questionnaire, 2,125 respondents completed and submitted it; thus, representing a survey response rate of 58.9 percent. Comparing this final sample with its greater population, this sample was deemed representative of

working adults in private households in Great Britain age 16 and higher who have been employed in paid work over the past two years (excluding self-employed individuals) (Fevre, Nichols, Prior, & Rutherford, 2009). Of the completed responses, 58 contained missing data and were therefore removed. This left a final sample of 2,067 responses.

Participants

The control variables that are used in this study highlight many of the important characteristics of participants in the study. With respect to age, about 8% were between 16-24 years of age, about 13% were between 25-32, about 19% were between 33-40, about 24% were between 41-49, and about 37% were 50 and above. Approximately 94% of the participants were White. With respect to highest educational qualification, about 14% have a postgraduate or higher degree, 16% have an undergraduate degree, 14% have diplomas in higher education, about 17% have A/AS levels/SCE higher, about 17% have O level/GCSE grades A-C, about 8% have O level/GCSE grades D-G, about 4% have trade apprenticeships or other education, and approximately 9% have no education. About 71% of participants were full-time employees at their place of work. With respect to length of service, about 12% have up to one year of service, about 16% have 1-2 years, about 20% have 3-5 years, about 31% have 6-15 years, and about 22% have more than 15 years of service. About 44% of participants are Male.

Measures

Workplace Victimization. Workplace victimization was measured based on an abridged version of the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997), which has been used in a number of studies on victimizing behaviors in the workplace (e.g., Baillien et al., 2011; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). This abridged version of the NAQ is comprised of six items. The items were assessed on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" to "Daily". Sample items include "Being insulted or having offensive remarks made about you", "Being treated in a disrespectful or rude way", and "Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work". Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.72.

Role Ambiguity. Role ambiguity was measured based on an existing scale for role ambiguity (Edwards et al., 2008). The scale for role ambiguity consisted of five items that asked participants about their level of clarity about expectations that surround their work and role requirements, which were re-coded consistent with prior treatments of role ambiguity measures (e.g., Gong et al., 2001; Yun et al., 2007). The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" to "Always". Sample items include "I am clear about what is expected of me at work", "I know how to go about getting my job done at work", and "I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are at work". Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.87.

Perceived Leadership Support. The scale used to measure perceived leadership support consisted of six items asking about the participant's line manager and managers in their

place of work more broadly. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. Perceived leadership support has been supported as a construct because of the influence that managers beyond solely one's supervisor have on supporting employees (Amabile et al., 2004; Howell & Shamir, 2005). The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Sample items include "My line manager encourages me at work", "I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work", and "Managers are sincere in attempting to understand employees' views". Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.90.

Perceived Impersonal Work Climate. The scale used to measure perceived impersonal work climate consists of three items and closely resembles inverse statements from the caring ethical climate scale (Victor & Cullen, 1988). The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Sample items include "Where I work, the needs of the organization always come before the needs of the people", "Where I work, you have to compromise your principles", and "Where I work, people are not treated as individuals". Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.79.

General Health. The scale used to measure general health is a one-item question requesting respondents to indicate how the participant feels his/her health is in general. The item is assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Very good" to "Very bad". This scale was re-coded so that higher levels reflect better health. A single item variable

has often been used to measure general health in prior research (Mossey & Shapiro, 1982; Williams et al., 2006). Research has also demonstrated that a single-item general health measure is more appropriate to use when it is measured as the outcome variable (Bowling, 2005). Moreover, as Williams et al. contend, "The use of single-item report assessments of general health as an indication of health status is long established" (2006: p. 30).

Control Variables. I controlled for a number variables that have been previously reported to be correlated with an individual's likelihood of experiencing workplace victimization. Studies have found that *age* is related to workplace victimization (e.g., Dupre et al., 2006; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). Moreover, Hoel et al. (1999) argues that employees who are very young or very old may both be likely targets of victimizing behaviors. Age was measured in five groups and was coded as follows: 1 = 16-24, 2 = 25-32, 3 = 33-40, 4 = 41-49, 5 = 50 and over. Researchers have also found that *gender* (e.g., Lewis & Gunn, 2007) is associated with victimizing behaviors. Unlike males who tend to only be victimized by other males (Einarsen et al., 2011), females are typically victimized by both males and females increasing their likelihood of being subjected to victimizing behaviors. Gender was coded as follows: 0 = Male, 1 = Female.

Researchers have also found that *ethnic minority status* is a predictor of victimization in the workplace. More specifically, research reveals that ethnic minorities tend to be subjected to victimizing behaviors at significantly higher rates than non-ethnic minorities (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). Ethnic group was coded as follows: 0 = Non-White,

1 = White. Employee *work status* has also been found as a predictor of victimizing behaviors, since part-time employees may be seen as more vulnerable due to less power in the organization (Dupre et al., 2006). Working status was coded as follows: 0 = Part-time, 1 = Full-time. For similar reasons, employees who have little *service length* may also be more likely candidates for victimization (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). Service length was measured in five categories and was coded as follows: 1 = up to 1 year, 2 = 1 to 2 years, 3 = 3 to 5 years, 4 = 6 to 15 years, 5 = More than 15 years.

Finally, an employee's *highest educational qualification* represents a predictor of victimizing behaviors since employees who have low levels of education may be seen to hold less power (Hoel et al., 1999). Highest educational qualification was measured according to eight categories consistent with the British education system and was coded as follows: 1 = Higher degree or postgraduate, 2 = Degree (undergraduate), 3 = Diplomas in higher education or other HE, 4= A/AS levels/SCE Higher, 5 = O level/GCSE grades A-C, 6 = O level/GCSE grades D-G, 6 = Other including trade apprenticeships.

Analytic Strategy

Based on the conceptual model that was developed when formulating the hypotheses for this study, I use the approach posited by Edwards and Lambert (2007) to test the mediated moderation model, which has also been used in related research (e.g., Lian, Ferris, & Brown, 2012; Tepper et al., 2008). This approach is consistent with the one proposed by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) for testing mediated-moderation. Mediated moderation entails that a moderator effect is transmitted through the mediator

variable posited (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). Moreover, the independent variable and moderator variable interact to influence the mediator variable, while the mediator then influences the dependent variable (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). However, the path from the mediator variable to the dependent variable is not influenced by the moderator variable (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). This refers to the first stage mediated moderation model and is the specific model that I am testing in this study.

Edwards and Lambert's (2007: p. 2) framework suggests the need to test the indirect effects of the model at *selected levels* of the moderator. This has also been advocated in prior research (e.g., Aiken & West, 1991; Lian et al., 2012; Stolzenberg, 1980; Tate, 1998). Notably, when combining moderation and mediation models, I produce multiple models (paths) that each displays the indirect effects at specific levels of the moderator variable rather than a single path model (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). Consistent with prior studies (e.g., Cianci et al., 2010; Lian et al., 2012), when testing for significance I am only interested in the indirect effects, which refers to the path from the independent variable to the mediator variable and the path from the mediator variable to the dependent variable (Hayes et al., 2011; Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). Moreover, I use an SPSS macro developed by Preacher et al., (2007) and refined by Hayes (2012). This refined macro tests the path analysis framework described in Edwards and Lambert (2007) and Preacher et al. (2007). For testing and reporting procedures of mediated moderation, I closely follow those of Cianci et al. (2010).

As several researchers contend, the model should be tested using a technique called bootstrapping (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Lian et al., 2012; Efron & Tibshirani, 1993; Mooney & Duval, 1993; Stine, 1989). A minimum of 1,000 bootstrap samples are recommended with a bias-corrected confidence interval (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Efron & Tibshirani, 1993; Lian et al., 2012; Mooney & Duval, 1993), while I use 5,000 with a bias-corrected confidence interval given the large sample size of this study. The bias-corrected confidence interval adjusts for any bias in the bootstrap distribution (Lian et al., 2012). When the moderator variable is a continuous variable, researchers have also recommended that the values used and reported should be one standard deviation above and below its mean (Aiken & West, 1991; Edwards & Lambert, 2007). When testing a mediation and mediated-moderation model, researchers can conclude that the result of the path is statistically significant when the 95% confidence interval excludes 0 (Edwards & Lambert, 2007).

There are three steps that are posited in Edwards and Lambert's (2007) approach. The first is to test and report the influence of the moderator variables on the relationship between the independent variable and the mediating variable. The second is to test and report the influence of both the independent and potential mediator variables on the dependent variable. Hierarchical regression analysis is used to test the first two steps. The third is to test the indirect effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable at various levels of the moderator (plus and minus one standard deviation from the moderator(s) mean). A combination of moderated regression analysis and path analysis is

used to test the third step through the macro described earlier (Hayes, 2012; Preacher et al., 2007).

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Because the measures have been validated in prior studies, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis. I did, nonetheless, run an exploratory factor analysis (see Appendix A) to inspect factor loadings. The items did indeed load onto the intended variables. I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the fit of the measurement model. Using structural equation modeling, I included each of the five latent variables into a single CFA. Each latent variable in the model was represented by its respective measurement items, while each item was only allowed to load on the construct that the item was intended to represent. Moreover, I allowed the intercorrelations among all the constructs in the study to be freely estimated. When testing the fit of the measurement model, I used the fit indices recommended by Kline (2010). These fit indices include the Chi-squared test, RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR. The results of the single CFA model revealed acceptable fit. The chi-square test statistic was 6.08, the RMSEA was .049, the CFI was .955, and the SRMR was .056. In addition, the tests revealed that all the factor loadings were significant.

Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

TABLE 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age[a]	3.68	1.30	-									
2. Ethnic Group[b]	.94	.23	.11**	-								
3. Highest Education[c]	3.93	2.11	.14**	.04	-							
4. Working Status[d]	.71	.45	.02	-.02	-.09**	-						
5. Length of Service[e]	3.36	1.30	.35**	.06**	.04	.09**	-					
6. Gender[f]	.56	.50	-.02	.01	-.06**	-.35**	-.03	-				
7. Role Ambiguity	1.39	.55	-.07**	-.01	-.14**	.10**	-.04	-.09**	-			
8. Perceived Leadership Support	3.56	.90	-.03	.02	-.05*	-.08**	-.02	.03	-.42**	-		
9. Perceived Impersonal Climate	2.87	1.01	.07**	-.01	.03	.13**	.07**	-.11**	.36**	-.58**	-	
10. Victimization	1.46	.68	-.04	.05	-.10**	.11**	.05*	.04	.28**	-.34**	.30**	-
11. General Health	4.26	.72	-.15**	.00	-.11**	.02	-.02	-.01	-.15**	.21**	-.14**	-.17**

N= 2,067; ** $p<0.01$; * $p<0.05$

[a] Age coded as follows: 1 = 16-24, 2 = 25-32, 3 = 33-40, 4 = 41-49, 5 = 50 and over.

[b] Ethnic group coded as follows: 0 = Non-White, 1 = White.

[c] Highest Education coded as follows: 1 = Higher degree or postgraduate, 2 = Degree (undergraduate), 3 = Diplomas in higher education or other HE, 4= A/AS levels/SCE Higher, 5 = O level/GCSE grades A-C, 6 = O level/GCSE grades D-G, 6 = Other including trade apprenticeships, 7 = None.

[d] Working status coded as follows: 0 = Part-time, 1 = Full-time.

[e] Length of Service coded as follows: 1 = up to 1 year, 2 = 1 to 2 years, 3 = 3 to 5 years, 4 = 6 to 15 years, 5 = More than 15 years.

[f] Gender coded as follows: 0 = Male, 1 = Female.

The table above (see Table 1) presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations between all the variables in the study. The descriptive statistics reveal that role ambiguity is negatively correlated with perceived leadership support and health, while positively correlated to perceptions of an impersonal work climate and victimization. Perceived leadership support is negatively correlated with perceptions of an impersonal work climate and victimization, while positively correlated with general health. Perceptions of an impersonal work climate are positively correlated with workplace victimization, while negatively correlated with general health. Finally, workplace victimization is negatively correlated with general health. Interestingly, however, the means of perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate are both relatively high – with the mean of perceived leadership support being quite high – which suggest that employees tend to perceive high levels of leadership support but also an impersonal work climate. The correlation between the two nevertheless reveals a strong negative relationship, which suggests that high levels of perceived leadership support are typically associated with perceptions of a low impersonal work climate.

Regression and Path Analysis Results

Step 1: Moderating Roles of Perceived Leadership Support and Perceived Impersonal Work Climate on the Relationship between Role Ambiguity and Workplace Victimization

As mentioned earlier, Edwards and Lambert's (2007) approach suggests that the first step is to test whether the moderating variables influence the relationship between

the independent variable and the mediator variable (see also, Lian et al., 2012). Table 2 (see below) presents the results of the hierarchical regression analyses, which tests whether perceived leadership support moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization. Moreover, according to the conceptual model presented earlier, the moderated relationship of perceived leadership support on role ambiguity and workplace victimization is predicted to vary across perceived impersonal work climate. Thus, this latter relationship is tested as a three-way interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceived impersonal work climate on workplace victimization.

TABLE 2

Results of Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis: Step 1 Workplace Victimization

Variables	DV = Workplace Victimization			
	Model 1 βs	Model 2 βs	Model 3 βs	Model 4 βs
Control Variables				
Age	-.06*	-.05*	-.06**	-.07**
Ethnic Group	.05*	.05*	.05**	.05**
Highest Educational Qualification	-.08***	-.05*	-.08***	-.09***
Working Status	.13***	.11***	.10***	.09***
Length of Service	.06**	.07**	.06**	.06**
Gender	.08***	.10***	.09***	.10***
Independent Variables				
Role Ambiguity		.27***	.10***	.07**
Perceived Leadership Support			-.28***	-.21***
Perceived Impersonal Climate				.16***
Moderator Variables				
Role Ambiguity × Perceived Leadership Support			-.11***	-.12***
Role Ambiguity × Perceived Impersonal Climate				.08**
Perceived Leadership Support × Perceived Impersonal Climate				.02
Role Ambiguity × Perceived Leadership Support × Perceived Impersonal Climate				.08*
R2	.03	.10***	.18***	.19***
Adjusted R2	.03	.10	.17	.19
Change in R2		.07***	.07***	.02***
F	11.78***	34.23***	48.87***	37.46***
df (regression, residual)	(6, 2050)	(7, 2059)	(9, 2057)	(13, 2053)

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$

For Model 1 (see above), I first centered all the independent and moderating variables before testing the interactions. As can be seen in Table 2, the control variables were first entered into the model. Model 1 reveals that the control variables account for three percent of the variance in workplace victimization. Among some of the interesting findings from the relationships between the control variables and workplace victimization, full-time employees are more likely to experience workplace victimization than part-time employees (β = .13, 95% confidence interval (CI) = .13, .26; $p < .001$). In addition, individuals of the ethnic majority are more likely to experience victimization (β = .05, 95% confidence interval (CI) = .02, .27; $p < .05$). Finally, females are more likely to experience victimization than males (β = .08, 95% confidence interval (CI) = .05, .17; $p < .05$).

In Model 2, the control variables were once again entered followed by role ambiguity. This model explains 10 percent of the variance in workplace victimization. As predicted in Hypothesis 1, the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization is significant (β = .27; 95% CI = .29, .39; $p < .001$). This indicates that the extent to which employees experience role ambiguity influences the frequency with which they experience victimizing behaviors in the workplace. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

In Model 3, in addition to the control variables and role ambiguity, I entered perceived leadership support and the two-way interaction between role ambiguity and perceived leadership support. This model accounted for 18 percent of the variance in workplace victimization. Role ambiguity (β = .10; 95% CI = .06, .18; $p < .001$) and

perceived leadership support ($\beta = -.28$; 95% CI = -.24, -.17; $p < .001$) were significantly related to workplace victimization. As predicted in Hypothesis 2, perceived leadership support moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization ($\beta = -.11$; 95% CI = -.16, -.07; $p < .001$). Figure 2 (see below) visually depicts the interacting relationship between role ambiguity and perceived leadership support. These results indicate that when employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity perceive low levels of leadership support, they are more likely to experience frequent victimizing behaviors. In addition, when employees with high role ambiguity perceived high levels of leadership support, they are less likely to experience frequent victimizing behaviors. Interestingly, the slope of the high perceived leadership line is fairly flat suggesting that when employees who experience high role ambiguity perceive high leadership support, they are not much more likely than employees who experience low role ambiguity to experience frequent victimizing behaviors. In other words, role ambiguity no longer has an impact on predicting frequent victimizing behaviors when employees perceive high leadership support.

FIGURE 2

Role Ambiguity and Workplace Victimization:

Moderating Role of Perceived Leadership Support

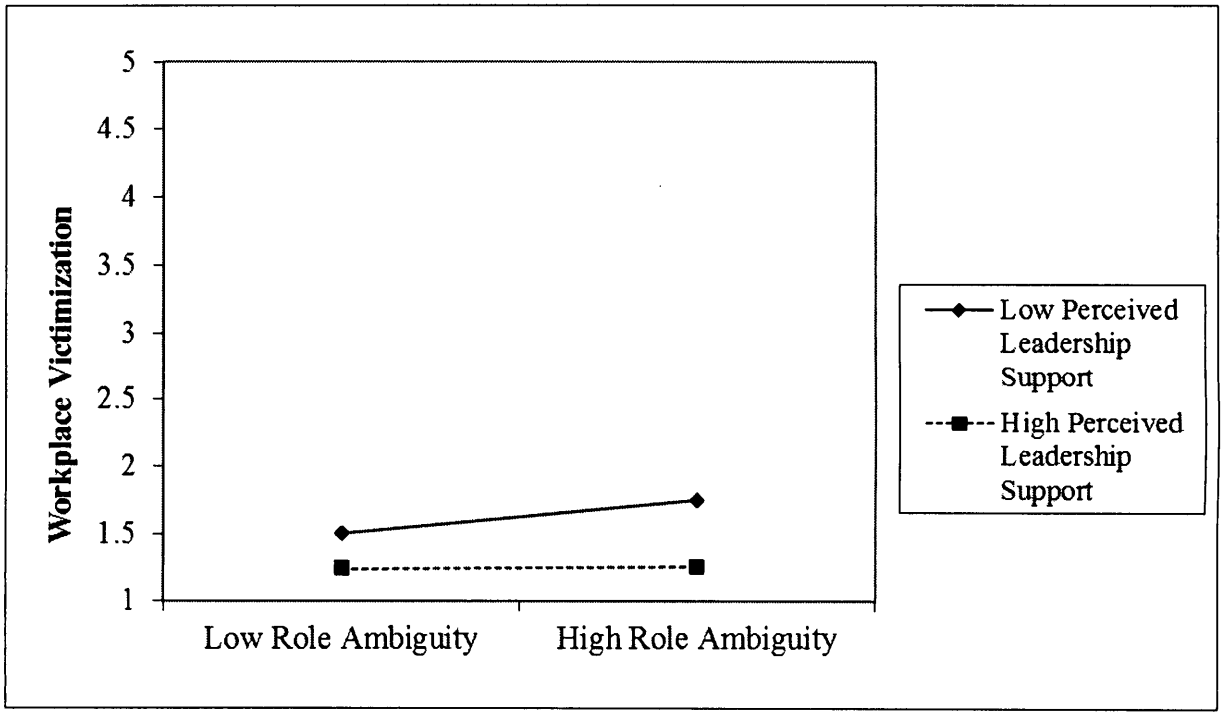


TABLE 3

Post-Hoc Tests of Interaction between Role Ambiguity and PLS

	DV = Workplace Victimization			
	PLS	Gradient of simple slope	t-value of simple slope	p-value of simple slope
Moderator Variable				
Perceived Leadership Support	-3 SD	.442	5.180	.000
	-2 SD	.335	5.889	.000
	-1 SD	.228	8.015	.000
	+1 SD	.014	.488	.625
	+2 SD	-.093	-1.637	.102
	+3 SD	-.20	-2.346	.019

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$

I further probed the two-way interaction between role ambiguity and perceived leadership support on workplace victimization (see Table 3 above). In particular, I conducted post-hoc tests of the interaction and examined up to three standard deviations above and below the mean of the moderator variable (Aiken & West, 1991). I found that the slopes for low levels of perceived leadership support were significantly different from 0, which suggests a significant moderating relationship at low levels of the moderator (i.e., perceived leadership support). Moreover, the slopes for high levels of perceived leadership support were significant different from 0 only at high levels of the moderator variable (i.e., plus 3 standard deviation from the mean). This suggests that perceptions of leadership support becomes a significant influence in moderating the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization when the employee perceives very high levels of perceived leadership support. Therefore, Hypotheses 2 was supported.

In Model 4, along with the control variables, independent variables, and lower order two-way interaction terms, I entered the three way interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceived impersonal work climate. This model explains 19 percent of the variance in workplace victimization. Moreover, the three-way interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate significantly predicts victimizing behaviors ($\beta = .08$; 95% CI = .01, .09; $p < .05$). Figure 3 (see below) allows for a visual inspection of this three-way interaction. As predicted in Hypothesis 3, the slopes suggest that employees who experience high role ambiguity and perceive high levels of leadership support will be more likely to experience frequent victimizing behaviors when perceiving an

impersonal work climate in comparison to perceptions that the work climate is not impersonal. As predicted, this suggests that even when employees who experience high role ambiguity perceive high levels of leadership support, perceptions that the work climate is impersonal can predict increased victimizing behaviors relative to when employees do not perceive the work climate to be impersonal.

FIGURE 3

Three-Way Interaction on Victimization: Role Ambiguity, PLS, and PIC

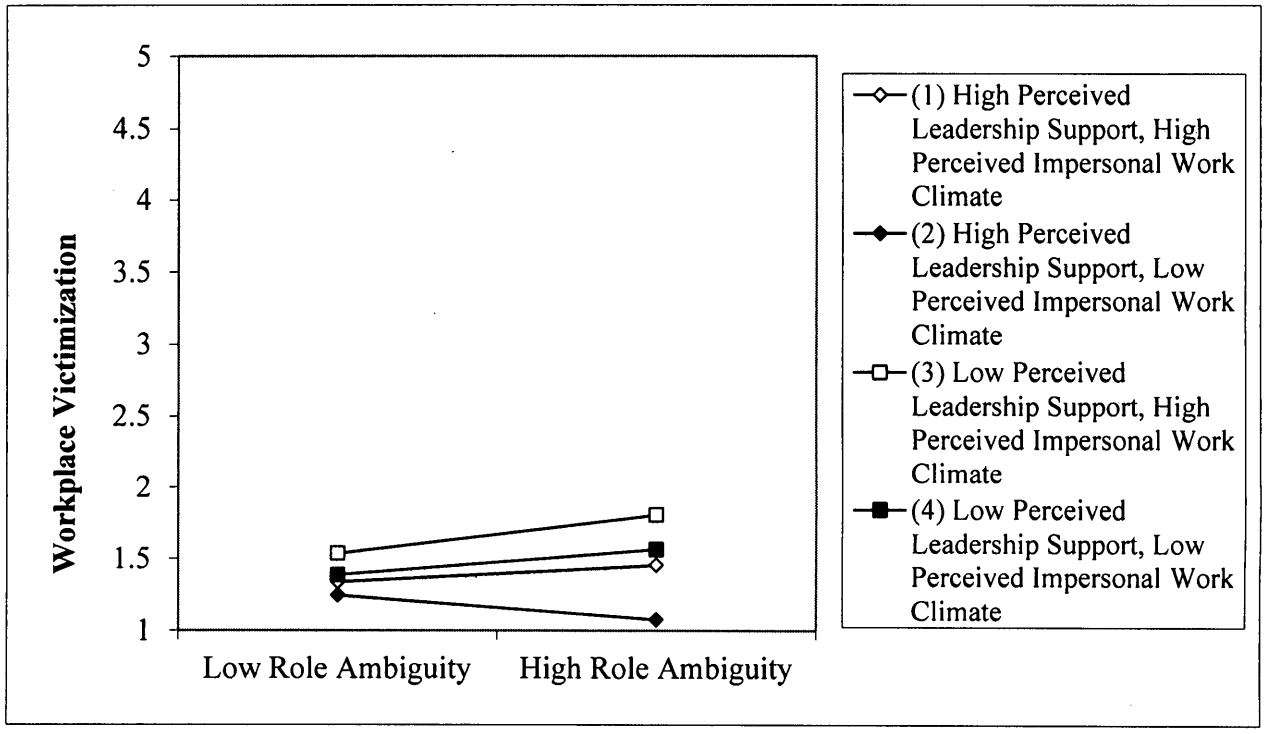


TABLE 4

Slope Differences for the Three-Way Interaction on Workplace Victimization

Pair of slopes	t-value for slope difference	p-value for slope difference
(1) and (2)	4.148	0.000
(1) and (3)	-2.424	0.015
(1) and (4)	-0.658	0.511
(2) and (3)	-4.706	0.000
(2) and (4)	-5.608	0.000
(3) and (4)	1.291	0.197

I further probed the three-way interaction and performed a slope differences test. I was particularly interested in the difference between slopes one and two. As Table 4 (see above) reveals, the differences between these two slopes are significantly different. In other words, employees who perceive high levels of leadership support are significantly more likely to experience workplace victimization when they perceive high levels of an impersonal work climate in comparison to low levels of an impersonal work climate. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Step 2: The Influence of Role Ambiguity and Workplace Victimization on General Health

According to Edwards and Lambert's (2007) approach, the second step involves estimating whether the independent variable and the mediator variable significantly influence the dependent variable (see also, Lian et al., 2012). Because I hypothesize that perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal climate will moderate the relationship between the independent variable (role ambiguity) and the dependent variable (general health), I also include these moderating relationships when testing the influence of role ambiguity on general health.

Table 5 (see below) presents the results of the hierarchical regression analyses of the above relationships, which tests the moderating effects of perceived leadership support on the relationship between role ambiguity and general health. As with the moderated relationship in Step 1, I predict that the moderated relationship of perceived leadership support on role ambiguity and general health will vary across perceived impersonal work climate. Hence, in Step 2, I test a three-way interaction between role

ambiguity, perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal climate on general health.

TABLE 5

Results of Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis: Step 2 General Health

Variables	DV = General Health				
	Model 1 βs	Model 2 βs	Model 3 βs	Model 4 βs	Model 5 βs
Control Variables					
Age	-.15***	-.16***	-.15***	-.15***	-.16***
Ethnic Group	.01	.02	.01	.01	.02
Highest Educational Qualification	-.09***	-.11***	-.09***	-.09***	-.11***
Working Status	.01	.03	.03	.03	.05
Length of Service	.04	.03	.03	.03	.04
Gender	.00	-.02	-.01	-.01	.00
Independent Variables					
Role Ambiguity		-.18***	-.09**	-.09**	-.08**
Perceived Leadership Support			.16***	.17***	.14***
Perceived Impersonal Climate				-.01	.01
Moderator Variables					
Role Ambiguity × Perceived Leadership Support			.03	.01	-.01
Role Ambiguity × Perceived Impersonal Climate				-.08*	-.07*
Perceived Leadership Support × Perceived Impersonal Climate				.02	.03
Role Ambiguity × Perceived Leadership Support × Perceived Impersonal Climate				-.06	-.05
Mediator Variable					
Workplace Victimization					-.12***
R2	.03	.06	.09	.09	.10
Adjusted R2	.03	.06	.08	.08	.09
Change in R2		.03***	.02***	.00	.01***
F	11.37***	19.54***	21.24***	15.41***	16.39***
df (regression, residual)	(6, 2060)	(7, 2059)	(9, 2057)	(13, 2053)	(14, 2052)

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

As can be seen in Model 1 (Table 5), I first entered the control variables into the model. Model 1 reveals that the control variables account for three percent of the variance in an employee's general health. As one may intuitively expect, the older that an individual is, the poorer his/her general health will tend to be (β = -.15, 95% confidence interval (CI) = -.11, -.06; $p < .001$). The results also reveal that an individual's education level is related to their general health, with higher education being associated with better general health (β = -.09, 95% confidence interval (CI) = -.05, -.02; $p < .001$).

In Model 2, the control variables were entered followed by role ambiguity. This model explains six percent of the variance in general health. As Hypothesis 4 predicts, high role ambiguity is associated with poorer general health (β = –.18; 95% CI = -.29, -.18; $p < .001$). This relationship reveals that employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity tend to suffer consequences related to their general health. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

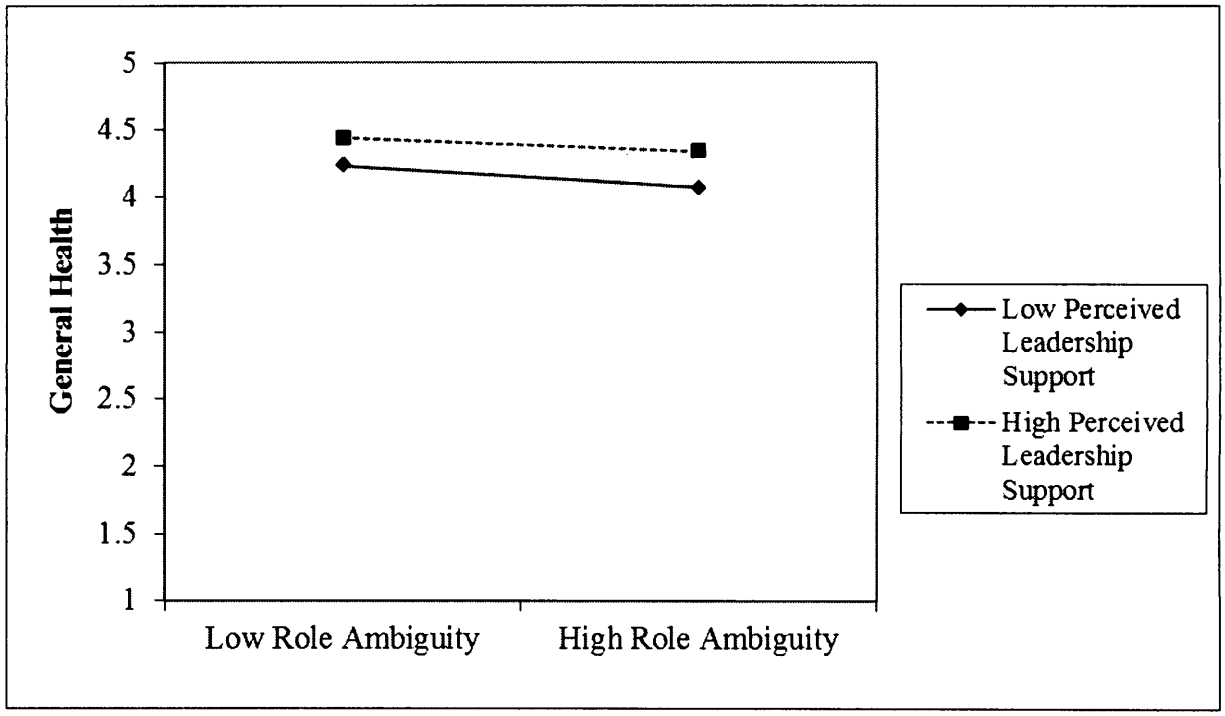
In Model 3, in addition to entering the control variables and role ambiguity, I entered perceived leadership support and the two-way interaction term of role ambiguity and perceived leadership support. This model accounted for nine percent of the variance in general health. While role ambiguity (β = –.09; 95% CI = -.19, -.05; $p < .01$) and perceived leadership support (β = .16; 95% CI = .09, .17; $p < .001$) remained significantly related to general health, the two way interaction term was not significantly related to general health. Hypothesis 5 predicted that perceived leadership support would moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and general health; however, this hypothesis was not supported. Figure 4 (see below) depicts the relationship between role ambiguity and

perceived leadership support on general health. These results indicate that high perceived leadership support protects the general health of employees who have low role ambiguity as well as high role ambiguity. Moreover, while the combination of low role ambiguity and high perceived leadership support appear to result in the best general health outcomes for employees, there is no specific interaction effect. I did not further probe this interaction because a non-significant interaction in the regression analysis suggests the lack of interpretability of simple slope analyses (Aiken & West, 1991). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

FIGURE 4

Workplace Victimization and General Health:

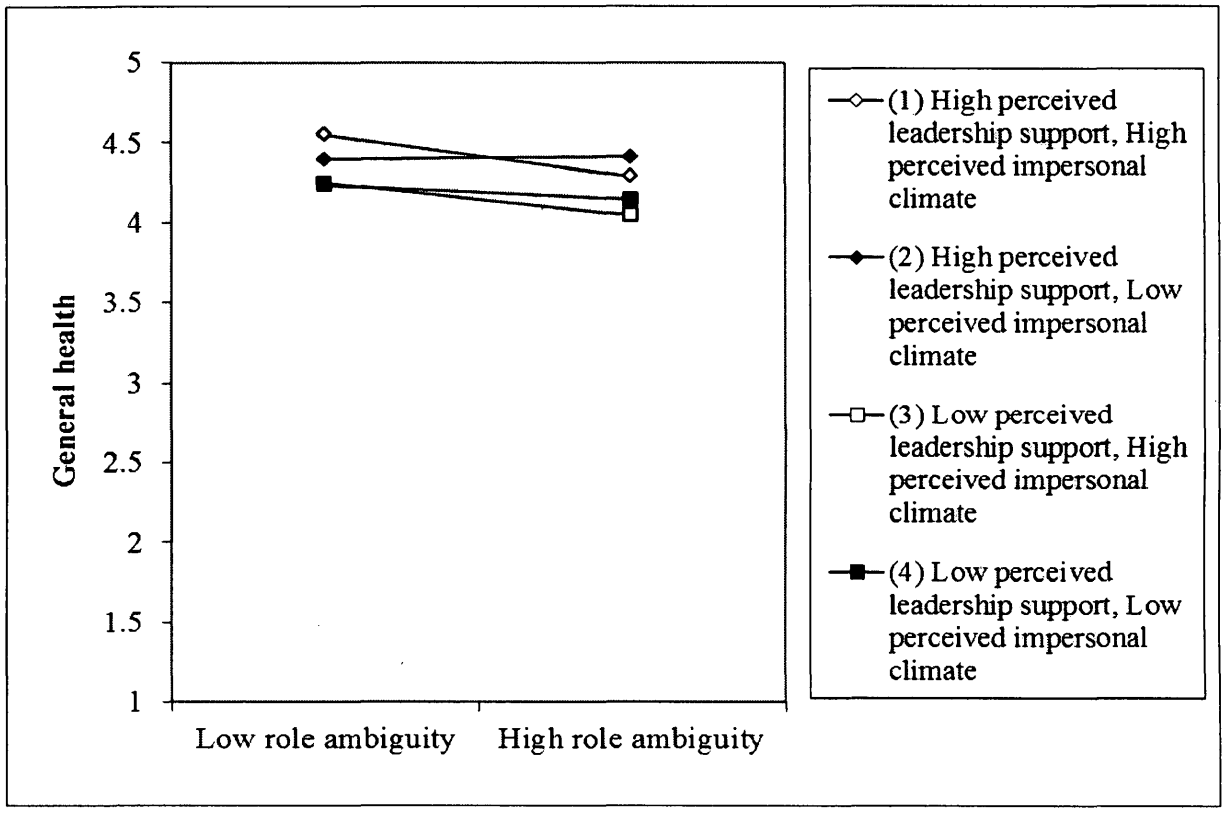
The Moderating Role of Perceived Leadership Support



In Model 4, in addition to the control variables, role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and the two-way interaction between role ambiguity and perceived leadership support, I entered perceived impersonal work climate, all lower order two-way interaction terms, and the three-way interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support, and perceived impersonal work climate. This model explains nine percent of the variance in general health. Moreover, the results reveal that the three-way interaction between role ambiguity, perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate does not significantly predict employee general health. Figure 5 (see below) presents a depiction of this three-way interaction. In contrast to the prediction in Hypothesis 6, the slopes across perceived leadership support and across perceived impersonal work climate appear to be fairly parallel. As mentioned earlier, I did not further probe non-significant interactions because of the lack of interpretability of simple slope analyses (Aiken & West, 1991). Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

FIGURE 5

A Three-Way Interaction between Role Ambiguity, Perceived Leadership Support, and Perceived Impersonal Work Climate on General Health



In Model 5, after entering the control variables, independent variables, and two-way and three-way interaction terms, I entered the mediating variable. This model accounted for 10 percent of the variance in general health. As predicted in Hypothesis 7, workplace victimization is significantly related to general health ($\beta = -.12$; 95% CI = -.18, -.08; $p < .001$). In this test, I am not testing the actual mediating relationship; rather, the direct influence of the mediator variable (workplace victimization) on the dependent variable (general health) (see Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Lian et al., 2012). As the results indicate, the frequency with which employees experience workplace victimization has a significantly negative relationship with general health. In other words, employees who are frequently victimized in the workplace tend to have poorer general health. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was supported.

Step 3: The Mediated Relationship across Different Levels of the Moderator

Consistent with Edwards and Lambert's (2007) approach, the third step in testing a mediated-moderation relationship is to enter a larger equation including the variables from earlier steps. This larger equation tests the influence of the indirect effect of the independent variable (role ambiguity) on the dependent variable (general health) through the mediator variable (workplace victimization) across different levels of the moderator variables (perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal work climate) (Lian et al., 2012). As mentioned earlier, these levels will be tested and reported at plus and minus one standard deviation from the mean of the moderator variables (Aiken & West, 1991; Edwards & Lambert, 2007). Moreover, I use 5,000 bootstrap samples with a bias-

corrected confidence interval to test the model (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Efron & Tibshirani, 1993; Lian et al., 2012; Mooney & Duval, 1993). Preacher et al. (2007) and Hayes (2012) recommend 1,000 bootstrap samples for pilot studies and samples in the hundreds range, while 5,000 are recommended for large sample sizes (but samples sizes of less than 5,000). The mediating relationship across different levels of the moderators can be reported significant when the 95% confidence interval of the path examined excludes the number 0 (Edwards & Lambert, 2007).

Table 6 (see below) presents the indirect effects of role ambiguity on general health through different levels of perceived leadership support and perceived impersonal climate (see also, Cianci et al., 2010). When testing a mediated moderation model, the indirect effects represents the test statistic to examine whether the mediating relationship is significant across various levels of the moderator (Cianci et al., 2010; Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Lian et al., 2012). The indirect effect measures the path from the independent variable to the mediator and the path from the mediator to the dependent variable (Lian et al., 2012). As Table 4 reveals, workplace victimization mediates the relationship between role ambiguity and general health when perceived leadership support is low and perceived impersonal work climate is high, since the 95% confidence interval does not include the number 0 (95% CI = -.05; -.02). Workplace victimization also mediates the relationship between role ambiguity and general health when perceived leadership support is high and perceived impersonal work climate is low, which is also inferred based on the confidence interval excluding the number 0 (95% CI = .01; .05).

Therefore, as predicted in Hypothesis 8a, the results indicate that employees who experience role ambiguity will more likely experience frequent victimizing behaviors when perceived leadership support is low and perceived impersonal climate is high. Furthermore, as predicted in Hypothesis 8b, the results indicate that employees who experience role ambiguity will less likely be subjected to victimizing behaviors when perceived leadership support is high and perceived impersonal climate is low. Therefore, Hypotheses 8a and 8b are both supported.

TABLE 6

Results of Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis and Path Analysis

	DV = General Health					
	PLS	PIC	Indirect Effect	Boot SE	LLCI	ULCI
Mediator Variable						
Workplace Victimization	Low	Low	-.02	.02	-.05	.01
	Low	High	-.03*	.01	-.05	-.02
	High	Low	.02*	.01	.01	.05
	High	High	-.01	.01	-.05	.01

* $p<0.05$

Note: Bootstrap sample size = 5,000.
PLS = Perceived Leadership Support; PIC = Perceived Impersonal Climate.
Low = Minus 1 standard deviation from the mean; High = Plus 1 standard deviation from the mean.
LLCI = Bootstrapped Lower Limit Confidence Interval;
ULCI = Bootstrapped Upper Limit Confidence Interval.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

General Overview

The workplace victimization literature has gained increased traction over the past two decades. Research on workplace victimization suggests that some targets are victimized at work because they precipitate these victimizing behaviors from others (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). However, there has been little exploration of the situations under which employees may become increasingly vulnerable to victimizing behaviors. This study seeks to address this research gap in two important ways. First, this study draws upon insights from the learned helplessness theory framework to derive predictors of helplessness that make employees more vulnerable to others at work. This study also draws upon insights from learned helplessness theory to explain how such feelings can become apparent to others. Learned helplessness theory also suggests consequences for general health, which I investigate in this study. Second, this study explores how feelings related to one's role (i.e., role ambiguity) interact with perceptions about factors at broader levels. These include 1) perceptions about the supportiveness of leaders, and 2) perceptions about the work climate; more specifically, the extent to which the work climate is perceived to be impersonal. These perceptions highlight the role of employee perceptions of the context beyond an employee's feelings about his/her role.

Drawing on a conceptual blending of learned helplessness theory and victim precipitation theory, this study develops a conceptual model of workplace victimization that is tested using a mediated-moderation model. The study found that employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity are more likely to be subjected to victimizing

behaviors by others at work. However, high levels of perceived leadership support significantly attenuate the effects of high role ambiguity on the frequency of victimizing behaviors. Furthermore, this moderated relationship between role ambiguity and perceived leadership support on workplace victimization varies along perceptions of an impersonal work climate. Employees who experience high role ambiguity and perceive high levels of leadership support are more likely to experience victimizing behaviors when they perceive that the work climate is impersonal. This suggests that employee perceptions of the work climate play an important role in the model. In particular, even when employees felt that their leaders were supportive, their perceptions of the work climate nonetheless increased their likelihood of experiencing victimization when they perceived an impersonal work climate. This provides some support for Martinko and Gardner's (1982) inclusion of leader support and bureaucratic/impersonal work climate in their model as two important contributing factors.

The results of this study also revealed that employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity have poorer levels of general health than those who experience low levels of role ambiguity at work. However, this relationship between role ambiguity and general health was not moderated by perceived leadership support, which also did not vary along perceptions of an impersonal work climate. Nevertheless, the frequency with which an employee experiences victimizing behaviors was associated with low levels of general health. Finally, workplace victimization did mediate the relationship between role ambiguity and general health under two conditions: 1) when perceived leadership support is low and perceived impersonal work climate is high, and 2) when perceived leadership

support is high and perceived impersonal work climate is low. I discuss these findings in further detail below.

The Effects of Role Ambiguity, Perceived Leadership Support, and Perceived Impersonal Work Climate on Workplace Victimization

The findings from the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that role ambiguity was positively associated with workplace victimization. Perceived leadership support moderated this relationship, whereby low levels of perceived support from leaders were associated with greater exposure to victimizing behaviors. Conversely, high levels of perceived leadership support were associated with less exposure to victimizing behaviors. Finally, this moderated relationship varied along employee perceptions of an impersonal work climate. More specifically, employees who experienced role ambiguity and perceived high levels of leadership support were more frequently exposed to victimizing behaviors when they perceived that the work climate is impersonal. These results provided support for my first three predictions.

Given the significant empirical and meta-analytic support for role ambiguity as a predictor of workplace victimization (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006), it was not surprising to see that high role ambiguity was indeed related to greater exposure to victimizing behaviors. Nevertheless, given the strong levels of prior empirical support for this hypothesis, it *was* surprising to see that high levels of perceived leadership support attenuated the effects of high role ambiguity on workplace victimization. Indeed, the

interaction plot and post-hoc analyses revealed this interesting finding about high perceived leadership support. This may lend some further support to the learned helplessness theory as an explanation since employees who feel little control over their outcomes due to high role ambiguity may feel much less helpless when their leaders are perceived as supportive.

Finally, when employees who experienced high role ambiguity and high perceived support from leaders had perceptions that the work climate was impersonal, they were more likely to report victimizing behaviors than when they perceived that the work climate was not impersonal. This suggests that the work climate may also be accountable for the experience of workplace victimization. In particular, even when supervisors and leaders do their best to be supportive towards employees, the work climate can counteract these effects to some degree when it is perceived to be impersonal.

The Effects of Role Ambiguity, Perceived Leadership Support, and Perceived Impersonal Work Climate on General Health

Similar to the results for workplace victimization, the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that role ambiguity was negatively associated with general health. However, perceived leadership support did not moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and general health. While I predicted that high levels of perceived leadership support would attenuate the effects of high role ambiguity on employee health there was no significant interaction effect. One possible explanation for this suggests that perceived leadership support plays an even more important role than predicted, whereby low

perceived leadership support results in poorer health almost regardless of role ambiguity. This suggests an important focal role played by perceptions of support from one's leaders on general health that are powerful enough to minimize any differences explained by role ambiguity. In other words, when employees perceive high leadership support, such perceptions protect them against negative effects on their general health caused by role ambiguity. Similarly, when employees perceive low leadership support, such perceptions are sufficiently detrimental to override any negative effects on general health caused by low role ambiguity. This seems plausible since without perceived support from one's leaders, an employee may feel helpless to the situation because of the need to often rely on one's leaders to perform (Amabile et al., 2004).

The absence of a moderated relationship between role ambiguity and perceived leadership support on general health also meant that the relationship did not vary along perceived impersonal work climate. A plausible explanation is that the plots in Figure 5 do nevertheless reveal that employees who experience high role ambiguity, low perceived leadership support, and high perceived impersonal climate have the poorest outcomes for general health of all the possible interactions. In other words, this suggests that the effects of the three variables combined do entail the poorest set of outcomes for general health when one's role, leadership, and work climate are considered simultaneously. Therefore, while the results do not support a significant interaction effect, the results do support prior explanations that the worst possible combination for an employee's health is low role ambiguity, low perceived leadership support, and high perceived impersonal work climate.

The Mediating Effects of Workplace Victimization on Role Ambiguity and General Health at Different Levels of Perceived Leadership Support and Perceived Impersonal Work Climate

The test for mediated-moderation revealed that employees who experience high levels of role ambiguity will more likely experience victimizing behaviors that are associated with poor general health when perceived leadership support is low and perceived impersonal work climate is high. Conversely, when employees perceive high levels of leadership support and perceive low levels of an impersonal work climate they will less likely experience workplace victimization, which will be associated with better general health. This supported my prediction of mediated moderation relationship in which the mediated relationship varies across different levels of the moderator variables.

The results highlight an important contribution to the literature; namely, the role of perceptions of the broader context. While much of the workplace victimization literature has focused on the individual-level variables that predict victimizing behaviors, there is typically little concentration on the broader context within which these behaviors occur (Aquino & Thau, 2009). These contextual variables can serve as markers of vulnerability that become increasingly salient to others (Aquino & Thau, 2009), which appears to be the case in this study. This is because when employees perceived low support from leaders and perceived the work climate to be impersonal they were more likely to experience frequent victimizing behaviors.

In contrast, the results in this study also suggest that these contextual variables also have the potential to hide these markers of vulnerability from others. In other words, when employees perceived support from leaders and perceived that their work climate was not impersonal, insights from learned helplessness theory would suggest that employees will feel less helpless in their situation (Harvey et al., 2006). As learned helplessness theory suggests, employees who feel helpless engage in maladaptive behaviors that then becomes apparent to others during exchanges at work. However, low feelings of helplessness can prevent the maladaptive behaviors from manifesting. This study nonetheless contains some limitations that should be considered when discussing its findings.

Limitations

This study is of course not without its limitations. First, this study employed a cross-sectional research design. While a longitudinal research design would help establish causality between the relationships in the model, this was not possible because of the nature of the dataset. The data was collected as a one-time survey as part of the British initiative to understand how employees are treated at work. Nevertheless, the inclusion of interaction effects, and higher order interaction effects, allowed me to understand how a certain variable under investigation varies along another variable, which represents the focus of several hypotheses in this study. Because I cannot establish causality, I encourage future research to test similar models using longitudinal research designs.

Second, the study suffers from possible issues of common method variance. All of the information gathered was from a single source at a single point in time. The nature of the variables, however, lent themselves to self-report. For example, feelings of role ambiguity cannot be directly observed by others. The definition of workplace victimization emphasizes an employee's perception that he/she has experienced certain victimizing behaviors. Moreover, victimizing behaviors often do not occur publicly; thus, co-workers or supervisors may not observe most instances of victimization. Given the theoretical framework of learned helplessness theory, I believe that psychological climate will influence employees' feelings more strongly than actual climate. This is because of the psychological nature of feelings of helplessness, which are based on an employee's *perception* that he/she is not supported (Seligman, 1975). Finally, general health is also difficult to observe for others. An individual him/herself will tend to know best how his/her health is in general. Therefore, the variables used in this study do not lend themselves to reports by others or objective measures; thus, self-report data was most appropriate for the model tested. Indeed, research has revealed that self-report data are more valid than other reports for perceptual outcomes (Chan, 2009). Finally, several researchers have contended that interactions (e.g., Evans, 1985; Lian et al., 2012) and particularly complicated interactions (e.g., Chang, van Witteloostuijn, Eden, 2010) provide persuasive evidence that common method variance is not likely to be a problem.

Nevertheless, to examine whether common method variance was a problem in this study, I conducted a post-hoc Harman's single factor test (see Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). All five variables were entered into a single exploratory factor analysis and I constrained

the fixed number of factors to extract to 1. By running a factor analysis, this test allowed me to identify whether there was the presence of a single factor solution. If there is the presence of one general factor, this would suggest substantial common method variance since this factor would explain the majority of variance in the variables (over 50 percent) (Chiaburu & Baker, 2006; Podsakoff & Organ, 2006). Running this test revealed that one single factor did not explain the majority of original variance in the variables. Rather, the dominant factor only explained 32 percent of the variance.

Third, while I drew upon insights from learned helplessness theory as a theoretical framework to understand the antecedents and outcomes of workplace victimization, I did not specifically test feelings of helplessness. I did, however, use variables that were based on Martinko and Gardner's (1982) model of organizational-induced learned helplessness, and have been largely associated with feelings of helplessness in the literature: role ambiguity, perceptions of leadership support, and perceptions of work climate (Carlson & Kacmar, 1994; Martinko & Gardner, 1982). Moreover, researchers have cautioned against operationalizing and testing learned helplessness as an actual variable because of its highly psychological nature (Peterson et al., 1993). In other words, Peterson et al. (1993) contend that individuals do not actually realize that they are helpless in order to report feelings of helplessness. Instead, the authors suggest that learned helplessness theory should be used as a theoretical framework that is used to explain relationships between phenomena. The broad nature of learned helplessness theory indeed allows for potent theoretical explanations (Harvey et al., 2006).

Finally, the measures in this dissertation did not capture the source of the perpetrator. For example, when the perpetrator is a line manager or leader in the organization, this may simultaneously influence how an employee perceives the supportiveness of his/her leaders. While meta-analytic evidence has revealed that perpetrator source does not significantly influence targets' health outcomes (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010), I nevertheless encourage future research to capture the source of the perpetrator when also capturing perceptions of support from supervisors and/or leaders. To address some of these limitations and build on the potential focal role of perceived supervisor/leadership support, I conducted a second study.

STUDY 2: PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT AND WORKPLACE VICTIMIZATION: THE IMPACT ON EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

CHAPTER 7: RATIONALE FOR STUDY 2 AND INTRODUCTION

Based on the limitations identified in Study 1, as well as my findings, there are four critical avenues that can further enhance our understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. First, Study 1 illustrated that the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization varied along employee perceptions of supervisor and leadership support. The results indicated that when employees perceived high levels of leadership support, the level of role ambiguity had little to no influence on their reports of victimization. Hence, perceptions of support from leaders appeared to play a critical and perhaps focal role. Therefore, there may be an important direct relationship between perceptions of support and workplace victimization that was not investigated in study 1. To narrow this investigation, I specifically examine perceptions of supervisor support in Study 2 as a direct predictor of workplace victimization.

Second, the moderating influence of perceptions of leadership support on the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization appeared to nonetheless vary along employee perceptions of work climate. The workplace victimization literature has reported that an instrumental ethical climate in particular is associated with an increased presence of victimizing behaviors (Bulutlar & Unler Oz, 2009). An instrumental ethical climate suggests that the work climate directly or indirectly encourages self-interest-based and ego-based behaviors (Victor & Cullen, 1998). Hence,

while Study 1 found that employee perceptions of an impersonal work climate played an important interacting role in the model, I wanted to build on these results by investigating whether a more specific type of climate – an instrumental ethical climate – can be found to influence workplace victimization. This can allow me to offer more specific practical guidelines to organizations.

Third, as mentioned in the limitations section of Study 1, I did not control for perpetrator source. Because I did not control for perpetrator source, it was possible that targets who perceive low levels of leadership support were actually experiencing victimizing behaviors from a leader (e.g., supervisor). In this study, I sought to ask participants to only report on victimizing behaviors that came from a co-worker (and not their supervisor).

Fourth, Study 1 found that general health was an outcome of workplace victimization. In Study 2, I sought to build on this contribution by investigating the effects of workplace victimization on emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion (also sometimes referred to as burnout) has more direct implications for organizations than general health. Based on these four avenues, I further investigated workplace victimization building on insights from the literature on helplessness and victim precipitation.

Introduction

Supervisors play a critical role in guiding and supporting employees in the organization who report to them (Hall, 2007), and thus supervision represents an

important aspect within organizations. Hence, employees often turn towards their supervisor for support. When this support is missing, employees may find themselves in situations in which they feel helpless when faced with problems and issues in their work role. Such situations suggest the potential for vulnerability and feelings of helplessness for employees. As Aquino and Lamertz (2004) suggest, employees who appear vulnerable to others will tend to be more likely to be targeted by victimizing behaviors. Hence, perceptions of support from supervisors may play an important and direct role in explaining workplace victimization. This relationship appears intuitive based on the findings in study 1, which indicated that the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization was weak for employees who perceived high levels of leadership support.

Feelings of helplessness may be felt by employees when they perceive low levels of support from their supervisor; however, employees in such situations may look towards other aspects within the organization for support. For example, employees who feel little support from their supervisor may look towards their co-workers for support (Bhave et al., 2010). The work climate may predict how co-workers respond to employees. In particular, when the work climate is impersonal, co-workers may respond in uncaring ways, as suggested in study 1. Notably, research has identified certain climate types that signal appropriate behavior for employees (Victor & Cullen, 1988). More specifically, Victor and Cullen (1988) identified various ethical climates, including the instrumental ethical climate. As mentioned earlier, the instrumental ethical climate suggests that employees are encouraged to act in ways that are based on self-interest

(Victor & Cullen, 1988). Therefore, when employees perceive that their supervisors provide low levels of support to them, they may feel even more vulnerable when the ethical climate encourages employees to act in ways that promote self-interest.

The interaction between these forms of support from the supervisor and the ethical climate is suggested to be associated with workplace victimization. Feeling unsupported by one's supervisor may also be associated with intense and prolonged forms of stress (i.e., emotional exhaustion). Hence, in this study I seek to understand how perceptions of supervisor support interact with the ethical climate to explain workplace victimization, which I predict will be associated with increased emotional exhaustion. Therefore, this study will contribute to the workplace victimization literature by identifying key situational factors that are associated with workplace victimization. These key situational factors and their interaction suggest the presence of vulnerability and feelings of helplessness. Moreover, this study will also contribute to the literature by understanding how workplace victimization fits within the perceived supervisor and emotional exhaustion relationship.

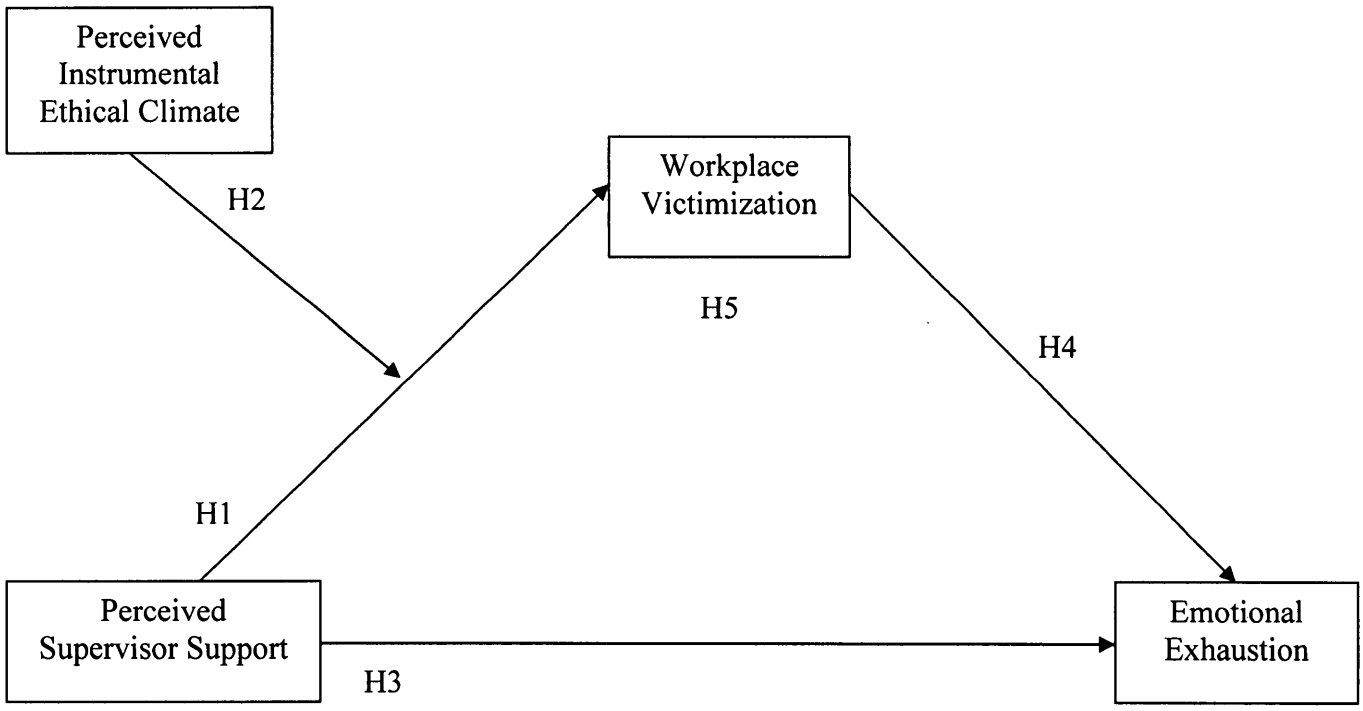
In this study, I will first present a conceptual model that will be tested. This model will be used to hypothesize the relationships tested. I will then discuss the method used to collect the data. Thereafter, I will describe the analytic strategy used to analyze the data. Based on the analysis of the data, I will report this study's results and findings. I will conclude with a deeper discussion of the results, provide a general discussion of the dissertation, discuss the theoretical contributions and avenues for future research, identify

implications for managerial practice, discuss the limitations, and offer a conclusion for the dissertation.

CHAPTER 8: HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

FIGURE 6

A Mediated Moderation Model of Workplace Victimization by co-workers



In the conceptual model above (see Figure 6), I depict the hypothesized relationships between the variables in the study. In brief, I predict that low perceptions of supervisor support will be associated with increased workplace victimization from co-workers and increased emotional exhaustion. I predict that the former relationship will be moderated by perceptions of instrumental ethical climate. When employees who perceive low levels of support from their supervisors feel that the ethical climate encourages self-interest-based behaviors (i.e., instrumental ethical climate), they will be more likely to experience workplace victimization. Moreover, I predict that workplace victimization from co-workers will mediate the relationship between perceptions of supervisor support and emotional exhaustion whereby employees who perceive low support from their supervisors will experience increased victimization from co-workers, which will be associated with increased emotional exhaustion. In the sections below, I explain and hypothesize each relationship in greater detail.

Perceived Supervisor Support and Workplace Victimization from co-workers

Path-goal theory suggests that an employee's leader/supervisor plays a critical role in supporting the achievement of an employee's goals through clarifying the path for the employee to take (House & Mitchell, 1974). In the absence of this support, employees may feel isolated in performing their role (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). In addition, when employees feel that they are not being supported by their supervisor, their feelings of isolation may minimize the confidence they display in carrying out their role. These feelings of isolation and lack of confidence may become apparent to others in their daily

exchanges at work (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). Perceptions of an unsupportive supervisor may also reduce the likelihood that employees may look towards their supervisor in challenging situations (House & Mitchell, 1974).

One such challenging situation may be the experience of being subjected to victimizing behaviors by others. If co-workers sense that an employee does not feel supported by his/her supervisor, this may also increase the likelihood that they victimize him/her since the supervisor will be perceived to be unlikely to intervene (Skogstad et al., 2007). Notably, employees who perceive that their supervisor does not support them will tend to appear more passive and numb relative to those who do perceive support from their supervisor (Martinko & Gardner, 1982).

In study 1, I found that employees' perceptions of leadership support played an important moderating role on the relationship between role ambiguity and workplace victimization. In particular, high levels of perceived leadership support attenuated employee reports of workplace victimization from those who experience role ambiguity. The addition of perceived leadership support into the regression equation also suppressed the influence of role ambiguity on employee reports of workplace victimization. Taken together, this suggests that perceived supervisor support may also play an important direct role in explaining workplace victimization, which was not examined in Study 1. Since perceptions of low levels of support from supervisors reduce the confidence that employees may exude in their role, employees may become more vulnerable to victimizing acts from co-workers (Aquino, 2000; Tepper et al., 2006). This lack of confidence will be rooted in their feelings that they cannot turn to their supervisor for

help and support. Victim precipitation theory suggests that employees who feel vulnerable and helpless tend to be more likely to be targeted with victimizing behaviors from co-workers. Therefore:

Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of supervisor support will be negatively associated with experiencing victimizing behaviors from co-workers.

Perceived Supervisor Support and Workplace Victimization from co-workers: The Moderating Role of Perceptions of an Instrumental Ethical Climate

When employees perceive support from their supervisors, their confidence may nonetheless also be affected by the work climate that surrounds them. As Study 1 indicated, employees who reported high role ambiguity and high perceived leadership support were more likely to experience victimizing behaviors when they perceived an impersonal work climate than when they perceived that the work climate is not impersonal. In study 2, I look more closely at ethical climate and in particular an instrumental ethical climate. When employees perceive an instrumental ethical climate, they perceive that self-interest-based and ego-based behaviors are prevalent in the workplace and directly or indirectly encouraged (Victor & Cullen, 1988). An instrumental ethical climate is particularly relevant to investigate because behaviors of workplace victimization may be described as self-interest-based and ego-based (Bulutlar & Unler Oz, 2009). Moreover, an instrumental ethical climate is one in which employees perceived that senior management encourages employees to be self-interested (Victor & Cullen, 1988). This suggests that employees who experience workplace victimization

from co-workers will tend to feel even more unsupported when they perceive that the ethical climate in the organization encourages such behavior from its employees.

As in study 1, I similarly expect that the extent to which the ethical climate is perceived to be instrumental will influence employees' level of confidence (or lack of confidence) in the degree of support that they can expect from the broader work climate. When employees who perceive low levels of supervisor support also feel that self-interest-based behaviors are encouraged by the work climate, they will tend to feel increased feelings of helpless against those who may target them. Employees who feel they cannot seek support from their supervisor will view an instrumental ethical climate as another source of absent support. What is more, employees will tend to perceive that the perpetrator is supported by the work climate when they perceive an instrumental ethical climate. Therefore:

> *Hypothesis 2: Perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate will moderate the relationship between perceived supervisor support and victimization, whereby high levels (rather than low levels) of perceived instrumental ethical climate will be associated with increased victimization from co-workers for employees with low perceived supervisor support.*

Perceived Supervisor Support and Emotional Exhaustion

Research has found that perceived supervisor support can significantly reduce the likelihood that employees experience emotional exhaustion (e.g., Hall, 2007). Similarly, evidence in the field of medicine suggests that low levels of perceived supervisor support

tend to result in increased employee exhaustion (Gibson, Grey, & Hastings, 2009). When employees perceive low levels of support from their supervisor, this may cause them to feel isolated in their situation. These feelings of isolation may make employees feel that they cannot turn to their supervisor in times of confusion or ambiguity. As mentioned earlier, path-goal theory suggests the importance of the supervisor or leader in clarifying the path for employees to achieve their goals (House & Mitchell, 1974). A lack of perceived support from an employee's supervisor will tend to make the path to his/her goals more challenging, which can result in increased levels of emotional exhaustion. As a result, employees in organizations are often dependent on their supervisor for support in various aspects of performing their work role.

Without clarity and support from the supervisor in their path to achieve work goals, employees may feel helpless in their work role. These feelings of being unsupported by the person who they rely on perhaps the most at work (i.e., supervisor), of course, can have negative implications for employees' emotions at work (Hall, 2007). Through these negative implications for employee emotions at work, employees who perceive low support from their supervisor will be more likely to experience increased emotional exhaustion. Therefore:

Hypothesis 3: Perceived supervisor support will be negatively associated with employee exhaustion.

Workplace Victimization from co-workers and Emotional Exhaustion

Meta-analytic evidence has supported a strong negative relationship between employee victimization and general health (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Study 1 provided support for this relationship by revealing that targets of victimization tended to report lower levels of general health than non-targets. In Study 2, I sought to investigate whether emotional exhaustion (also referred to as burnout) more specifically is influenced by victimization at work for targets. In other words, I wanted to understand whether employees who experience victimizing behaviors from co-workers report increased emotional exhaustion.

Stress theory and research suggest that stressors, such as victimizing behaviors at work, produce thoughts about the harmfulness of the stressor for the individual experiencing it, which stimulates strong emotions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The build-up of these emotions may be reflected by emotional exhaustion (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). Prior research in workplace victimization has reported that employees who experience victimization at work are more likely to report increased emotional exhaustion (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey et al., 2007). This is because victimizing behaviors can take a toll on employees' emotions through increased feelings of suffering, which reflects increased emotional exhaustion. Targets of victimization often report that they do not understand the behaviors they are experiencing, why they are experiencing such behaviors, and the intent and motives underlying the perpetrator's actions (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). This tends to reflect their assessments about the harmfulness of the stressors experienced (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These questions, and feelings of

uncertainty that constantly occur in targets' minds (Tracy et al., 2006), will tend to act as strains that will be associated with increased emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 4: Employee victimization from co-workers will be positively associated with employee exhaustion.

A Mediated-Moderation Relationship

Similar to Study 1, I sought to investigate whether a mediated-moderation relationship exists between the variables in the study. I used the previous hypotheses above to predict that employee victimization from co-workers will mediate the relationship between perceived supervisor support and emotional exhaustion. In particular, employees who perceive that they have low levels of support from their supervisor will more likely report experiencing victimizing behaviors from co-workers at work, which will be associated with increased emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, the relationship between perceived supervisor support and workplace victimization from co-workers will be moderated by the extent to which employees perceive that the ethical climate is instrumental. In particular, employees who perceive low levels of supervisor support will be more likely to report victimization from co-workers when they perceive that the ethical climate is instrumental. Therefore:

Hypothesis 5: There will be a mediated-moderation relationship between perceived supervisor support, perceived ethical climate, workplace victimization from co-workers, and emotional exhaustion. Employees who perceive low levels of supervisor support will be more likely to experience victimizing behaviors from

co-workers when they perceive a high instrumental ethical climate, while reports of victimization from co-workers will be associated with increased emotional exhaustion.

CHAPTER 9: METHOD

Participants and Data Collection Procedures

I collected the data from a large hospital in Ontario. Prior to collecting the data, I had my research project proposal reviewed and approved by the human participants review sub-committee in the office of research ethics at York University and the research ethics committee at the hospital. A survey was sent via email to all employees in the organization asking whether they would like to participate in the survey. Potential respondents could have completed the survey during work time or on their own personal time since the survey was contained within the email sent to them. The survey took approximately 35-45 minutes to complete. A cover letter was included in the survey. This cover letter assured potential respondents that completion of the survey is voluntary and that all responses would be kept confidential. It was also stated that the results that would be provided to management would be the aggregated results and not individual responses. An incentive in the form of a gift certificate to a restaurant was offered to employees who participate. In total, approximately 1,910 employees were emailed and 379 respondents consented to complete the survey. After removing incomplete surveys with missing data, 260 surveys were useable (13.6%). Response rates can typically be lower for sensitive topics such as workplace victimization. The response rate in this study was not very different from response rates obtained in other studies on workplace victimization (e.g., Greenberg & Barling, 1999; McKay et al., 2008; Schneider et al., 2000).

An invitation to complete the survey and a reminder three weeks later were sent to all employees. The last employee to complete the survey prior to the reminder was

recorded. To test possible non-response bias, I conducted a t-test between employees who completed the survey prior to the reminder and those who completed the survey following the reminder on all of the demographic variables and workplace victimization and emotional exhaustion. The t-test results revealed that the mean differences were not significant for any of the demographic variables, nor workplace victimization ($t = -1.103$, $p = 0.271$) and emotional exhaustion ($t = -.489$, $p = 0.625$).

In relation to age, less than one percent were younger than 20 years of age, approximately four percent were between 20 to 25, approximately 12 percent were between 26 to 30, approximately 11 percent were between 31 to 35, approximately 11 percent were between 36 to 40, approximately 15 percent were between 41 to 45, approximately 20 percent were between 46 to 50, approximately 13 percent were between 51 to 55, approximately 11 percent were between 56 to 60, and approximately 2 percent were between 61 to 65. In relation to gender, 90 percent of the respondents were females.

In relation to tenure with the organization, approximately 27 percent had been with the organization for up to 5 years, approximately 28 percent had been with the organization for 6 to 10 years, approximately 21 percent had been with the organization for 11 to 15 years, approximately 6 percent had been with the organization for 16 to 20 years, and approximately 18 percent had been with the organization for more than 20 years.

In relation to highest education level, approximately 7 percent stated high school diploma, approximately 39 percent stated college diploma, approximately 10 percent

reported a different diploma, approximately 30 percent stated a bachelor's degree, approximately 12 percent stated a master's degree, and approximately 2 percent stated other. In relation to employment status, approximately 74 percent of respondents were full-time employees.

Finally, in relation to occupation, approximately 26 percent were registered nurses (RN), approximately 5 percent were registered practical nurses, approximately 33 percent were all other health clinicians, approximately 25 percent held non-clinician positions (e.g., administrative, clerical, maintenance services, food services, etc.), and 9 percent were part of the leadership and management team.

Measures

Workplace Victimization from co-workers. The short negative acts questionnaire (SNAQ) was used to measure workplace victimization (Baillien et al., 2011). The scale consists of 10 items. The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" to "At least once a day". Participants were asked to respond to these items based on their exposure to these behaviors being perpetrated by co-workers (not their supervisor/leader). Sample items included "spreading of gossip and rumours about you" and "ignoring or excluding you". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.89.

Perceived Supervisor Support. A scale consisting of six items was used to measure perceived supervisor support (Eisenberger et al., 2002). The items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to Strongly agree". Sample items

included "My supervisor shows very strong concern for me" and "My supervisor is willing to help me when I need a special favor". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.96.

Instrumental Ethical Climate. A scale consisting of seven items was used to measure employee perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate (Victor & Cullen, 1988). The items were assessed on a 6-point scale ranging from "False" to "Completely true". Sample items included "In this unit, people protect their own interests above all else" and "In this unit, people are mostly out for themselves". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.83.

Emotional Exhaustion. A scale consisting of five items was used to measure employee exhaustion (Taris, Schreurs, & van Iersel-van Silfhout, 2001). The items were assessed on a 7-point scale ranging from "Never" to "Always". Sample items included "I feel emotionally drained from my work" and "I feel used up at the end of the workday". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.93.

Control Variables. I controlled for a number of factors in this study that may be correlated with an employee's likelihood of experiencing victimization at work. As for similar reasons to controlling for these variables in Study 1, I again controlled for age (e.g., Dupre et al., 2006), gender (e.g., Lewis & Gunn, 2007), work status (Dupre et al., 2006), service length (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996), and highest educational qualification (Hoel et al., 1999). Age comprised of 11 groups and was coded as follows: 1 = under 20, 2 = 21-25, 3 = 26-30, 4 = 31-35, 5 = 36-40, 6 = 41-45, 7 = 46-50, 8 = 51-55, 9 = 56-60,

10 = 61-65, 11 = over 65. Gender was coded 0 for female and 1 for male. Tenure was coded according to the number of years the participant has worked for the organization (e.g., 1 for one year of employment). Highest level of education comprised of five groups and was coded as follows: 1 = High School Diploma, 2 = College Diploma, 3 = Other Diploma, 4 = Bachelors Degree, 5 = Masters Degree. I also controlled for occupation and separated employees into two categories: nurses (coded as 1) and non-nurses (coded as 0). This is because the workplace victimization literature has revealed that victimizing behaviors are particularly prevalent among nurses (Hutchinson et al., 2006).

Analytic Strategy

As in Study 1, I used the approach posited by Edwards and Lambert (2007) to test mediated-moderation (also see, Lian, Ferris, & Brown, 2012; Tepper et al., 2008). Mediated-moderation occurs when a moderator effect is transmitted through the mediator variable in the model (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). First stage mediated-moderation, which is the model I test in this study, occurs when only the path from the independent variable to the mediator variable is influenced by the moderator variable, but not the path from the mediator variable to the dependent variable (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). As hypothesized, I will be focusing on the indirect effects of the model at selected levels of the moderator (e.g., Aiken & West, 1991; Lian et al., 2012; Stolzenberg, 1980; Tate, 1998). Similar to Study 1, I used an SPSS macro developed by Preacher et al., (2007) and refined by Hayes (2012). This refined macro tests the path analysis framework. Given the smaller sample size of Study 2, I used bootstrapping at 1,000 bootstrap samples with a

bias-corrected confidence interval (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Efron & Tibshirani, 1993; Lian et al., 2012; Mooney & Duval, 1993). When the moderator variable is a continuous variable – as is the case in Study 1 and 2 – the values used and reported should be one standard deviation above and below its mean (Aiken & West, 1991; Edwards & Lambert, 2007). When the 95% confidence interval excludes 0, the path can be labeled statistically significant (Edwards & Lambert, 2007).

CHAPTER 10: RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Because all of the measures in this study have been validated in prior studies, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). I conducted a CFA to examine the fit of the measurement model in this study. Using structural equation modeling, each of the four latent variables were entered into a single CFA. Each latent variable entered into the model was represented by its respective measurement items and each item was solely loaded onto the construct that the item was intended to represent. Furthermore, I also allowed the intercorrelations among all of the constructs in the model to be freely estimated. When examining the fit of the measurement model, I used the fit indices recommended by Kline (2010), as was done in Study 1. These fit indices include the Chi-squared test, RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR. The results of this single CFA model revealed an acceptable fit. The chi-square test statistic was 1.63, the RMSEA was .049, the CFI was .959, and the SRMR was .051. Finally, the tests revealed that all the factor loadings were significant.

Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

TABLE 7

Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations of Study 2 Variables

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age[a]	6.00	2.09	-									
2. Gender[b]	.10	.30	-.02	-								
3. Tenure[c]	12.00	8.90	.58**	-.06	-							
4. Education Level[d]	3.07	1.29	-.14*	.06	-.29**	-						
5. Employment Status[e]	.74	.44	.17**	.14*	.13*	-.03	-					
6. Occupation[f]	.30	.46	.15*	-.08	.20**	-.12	.09	-				
7. Supervisor Support	3.28	1.21	-.08	-.16**	-.10	.02	-.09	-.07	-			
8. Instrumental Ethical Climate	2.82	.97	.00	.20**	.01	-.03	.02	.07	-.45**	-		
9. Victimization	1.62	.63	.11	.03	.17**	-.06	.11	-.02	-.36**	.40**	-	
10. Emotional Exhaustion	3.80	1.30	.03	.02	.14*	-.07	.18**	.09	-.40**	.39**	.39**	-

N= 261; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05

[a] Age coded as follows: 1 = under 20, 2 = 21-25, 3 = 26-30, 4 = 31-35, 5 = 36-40, 6 = 41-45, 7 = 46-50, 8 = 51-55, 9 = 56-60, 10 = 61-65, 11 = over 65.

[b] Gender coded as follows: 0 = Female, 1 = Male.

[c] Tenure coded as follows: 1 = 1, 2 = 2, etc.

[d] Highest Education Level coded as follows: 1 = High School Diploma, 2 = College Diploma, 3 = Other Diploma, 4 = Bachelors Degree, 5 = Masters Degree.

[e] Employment status coded as follows: 0 = Part-time, 1 = Full-time.

[f] Occupation coded as follows: 0 = Non-nurse occupation, 1 = Registered Nurse (RN) or Registered Practical Nurse (RPN).

The table above (see Table 7) presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations between each of the variables in this study. The descriptive statistics reveal that there is a high negative correlation between perceptions of supervisor support and perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate. This would suggest that when employees perceive that the climate is based on self-interest, the supervisor also tends to be perceived as less supportive towards them. There is also a strong negative correlation between victimization from co-workers and perceived supervisor support. When employees perceive low support from their supervisor, they tend to report higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Finally, employees who perceive an instrumental ethical climate are also more likely to report increased levels of emotional exhaustion.

Regression and Path Analysis Results

Step 1: Moderating Role of Instrumental Ethical Climate on the Relationship between Perceived Leadership Support and Workplace Victimization from co-workers

The first step according to Edwards and Lambert's (2007) approach is to test the influence of the moderating variable on the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator variable (see also, Lian et al., 2012). Table 8 (see below) presents the results of the hierarchical regression analyses, which tests whether perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate moderates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and workplace victimization from co-workers.

TABLE 8

Results of Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis: Step 1 Workplace Victimization

Variables	DV = Workplace Victimization		
	Model 1 βs	Model 2 βs	Model 3 βs
Control Variables			
Age	.00	.00	.01
Gender	.03	-.03	-.07
Tenure	.16*	.14	.14*
Highest Education Level	-.01	-.01	-.01
Employment Status	.09	.07	.09
Occupation	-.06	-.08	-.10
Independent Variables			
Perceived Supervisor Support		-.34***	-.17**
Instrumental Ethical Climate			.32***
Moderator Variables			
Perceived Supervisor Support × Instrumental Ethical Climate			-.14*
R2	.04	.15	.26
Adjusted R2	.02	.13	.23
Change in R2		.11***	.11***
F	1.79	5.91***	9.15***
df (regression, residual)	(6, 253)	(7, 252)	(9, 250)

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$

For Model 1 (see above), the independent and moderating variables were first centered before being entered into the regression equation. As presented in Table 8, I first entered the control variables into the model. Model 1 reveals that the control variables entered into the model account for four percent of the variance in workplace victimization from co-workers. Interestingly, only tenure with the organization was significantly related to reports of experiencing victimizing behaviors from co-workers at work ($\beta = .16$, 95% confidence interval (CI) = .00, .02; $p < .05$).

For Model 2, I entered the control variables as well as perceived supervisor support. This model accounted for approximately 15 percent of the variance in workplace victimization from co-workers. Model 2 reveals that perceived supervisor support was significantly related to employee reports of experiencing victimization from co-workers ($\beta = -.34$, 95% confidence interval (CI) = -.24, -.12; $p < .001$). Hence, employees who perceived low levels of support from their supervisors were more likely to experience victimization from co-workers. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

For Model 3, I entered the control variables, perceived supervisor support, as well as perceptions of instrumental ethical climate and the interaction term between perceived supervisor support and perceptions of instrumental ethical climate. This model accounted for approximately 26 percent of the variance in workplace victimization from co-workers. The interaction term between perceived supervisor support and perceptions of instrumental ethical climate were significantly related to workplace victimization ($\beta = -.14$, 95% confidence interval (CI) = -.13, -.01; $p < .05$). The simple slopes (see Figure 7 below) reveal that when employees perceive low levels of supervisor support, they are

even more likely to experience victimization from co-workers at work when they perceive a high instrumental ethical climate rather than a low instrumental ethical climate. Moreover, those who perceived high levels of supervisor support were more likely to experience victimization from co-workers when they perceived an instrumental ethical climate.

FIGURE 7

Two-Way Interaction between Perceived Supervisor Support and Instrumental Ethical Climate on Workplace Victimization

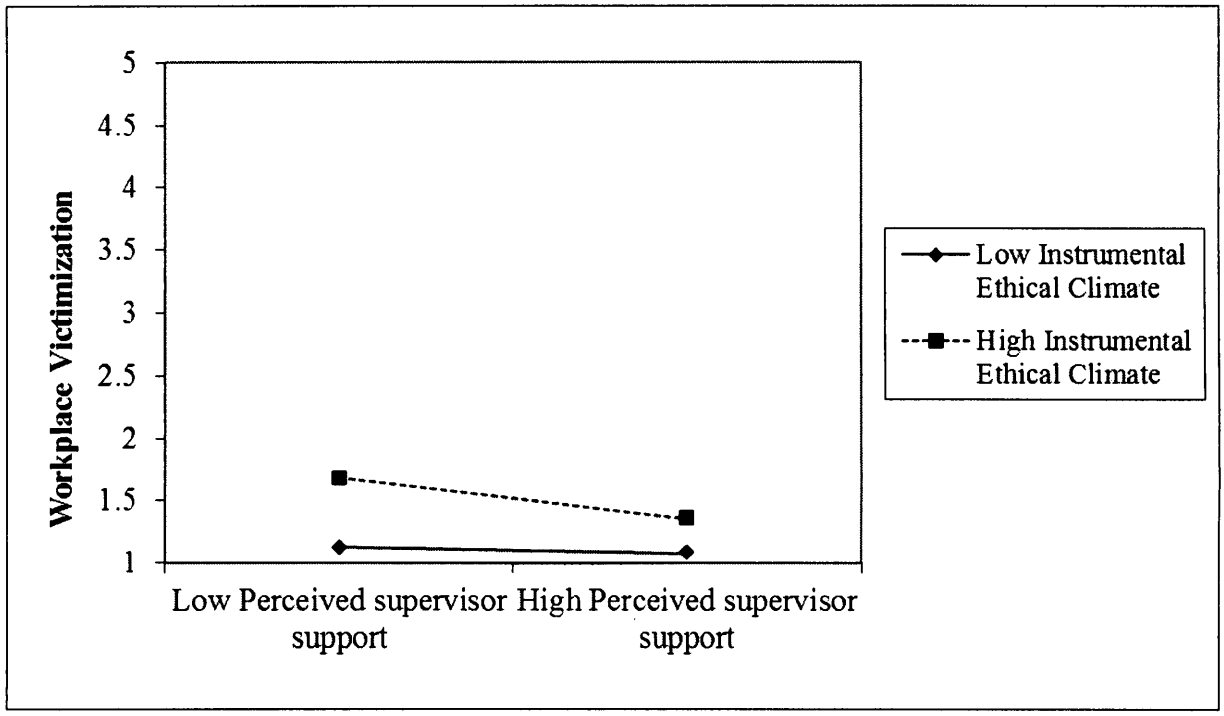


TABLE 9

Post-Hoc Analysis of Interaction between Perceived Supervisor Support and Instrumental Ethical Climate on Workplace Victimization

	DV = Workplace Victimization			
	IEC	Gradient of Simple slope	t-value of simple slope	p-value of simple slope
Moderator Variable				
Instrumental Ethical Climate (IEC)	-3 SD	.125	1.274	0.204
	-2 SD	.053	.770	0.442
	-1 SD	-.018	-.404	0.687
	+1 SD	-.160	-3.627	0.000
	+2 SD	-.231	-3.338	0.001
	+3 SD	-.303	-3.095	0.002

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$

I further probed the interaction between perceived supervisor support and perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate on reports of workplace victimization from co-workers. I used post-hoc tests designed to measure whether the simple slope is significantly different from 0 at particular levels of the moderator variable (instrumental ethical climate). As Table 9 (see above) reveals, only when employees perceived high levels of an instrumental ethical climate were they more likely to report experiencing workplace victimization from co-workers when perceiving low levels of supervisor support. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

Step 2: The Influence of Perceived Supervisor Support and Workplace Victimization from co-workers on Emotional Exhaustion

Based on Edwards and Lambert's (2007) approach, the second step requires the testing of whether the independent variable and the mediator variable significantly influence the dependent variable (see also, Lian et al., 2012). Table 10 (see below) presents the results of the hierarchical regression analyses of the relationships mentioned above.

TABLE 10

Results of Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis: Step 2 Emotional Exhaustion

Variables	DV = Emotional Exhaustion		
	Model 1 βs	Model 2 βs	Model 3 βs
Control Variables			
Age	-.10	-.11	-.11
Gender	.01	-.05	-.04
Tenure	.16	.12	.09
Highest Education Level	-.03	-.03	-.02
Employment Status	.17**	.16**	.13*
Occupation	.06	.03	-.06
Independent Variable			
Perceived Supervisor Support		-.39***	-.30***
Mediator Variable			
Workplace Victimization			.27***
R2	.06	.20	.27
Adjusted R2	.04	.18	.24
Change in R2		.14***	.06***
F	2.25*	8.06***	10.19***
df (regression, residual)	(6, 254)	(7, 253)	(8, 252)

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$

In Model 1, I entered all the control variables into the hierarchical regression analysis model. Model 1 accounted for approximately seven percent of the variance in employee emotional exhaustion. Only employment status was significantly associated with emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .17$, 95% confidence interval (CI) = .20, .93; $p < .01$). This result suggests that employees who have full-time status with the organization were more likely to report experiencing victimization from co-workers at work.

In Model 2, I entered all the control variables as well as perceived supervisor support. This model accounted for approximately 21 percent of the variance in employee emotional exhaustion. Perceived supervisor support was significantly related to emotional exhaustion ($\beta = -.39$, 95% confidence interval (CI) = -.53, -.29; $p < .001$). This result suggests that employees who perceive low levels of support from their supervisor are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion at work. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was supported.

In Model 3, I entered all the control variables, perceived supervisor support, and the mediator variable – workplace victimization from co-workers. This model accounted for approximately 27 percent of the variance in employee emotional exhaustion. Workplace victimization was significantly related to emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .27$, 95% confidence interval (CI) = .32, .80; $p < .001$). The results suggest that employees who report experiencing victimization from co-workers at work are significantly more likely to also report high levels of emotional exhaustion. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported.

Step 3: The Mediated Relationship across Different Levels of the Moderator

The third step when testing a mediated-moderation relationship involves a larger equation in which the influence of the indirect effects of the independent variable (perceived supervisor support) on the dependent variable (emotional exhaustion) through the mediator variable (workplace victimization from co-workers) is tested across different levels of the moderator variable (perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate) (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). Plus and minus one standard deviation from the mean of the moderator variable are tested and reported (Aiken & West, 1991; Edwards & Lambert, 2007). I used 1,000 bootstrap samples with a bias-corrected confidence interval (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Efron & Tibshirani, 1993; Lian et al., 2012; Mooney & Duval, 1993). When the 95% confidence interval of the path tested excludes the number 0, the mediating relationship across the different levels of the moderator can be labeled significant (Edwards & Lambert, 2007).

In Table 11 (see below), I report the indirect effects of perceived supervisor support on emotional exhaustion through different levels of employee perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate. This test examines whether victimization from co-workers (the mediator variable) is significant across different levels of the moderator – perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate (Cianci et al., 2010; Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Lian et al., 2012). The indirect effect measures both the path from the independent variable to the mediator variable as well as the path from the mediator variable to the dependent variable (Lian et al., 2012). As Table 11 reveals, workplace victimization from co-workers mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and

emotional exhaustion when perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate are high. This is inferred based on the absence of the number 0 within the 95% confidence interval (95% CI = -.18; -.04). This suggests that when employees perceive low levels of supervisor support, they are more likely to experience high emotional exhaustion when they are subjected to victimizing behaviors from co-workers at work. Moreover, employees who perceive low levels of supervisor support are more likely to report victimization from co-workers when they perceive an instrumental ethical climate. Therefore, hypothesis 5 is supported.

TABLE 11

Results of Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis and Path Analysis Study 2

	DV = Emotional Exhaustion				
	IEC	Indirect Effect	Boot SE	LLCI	ULCI
Mediator Variable					
Workplace Victimization	Low	-.01	.02	-.06	.03
	High	-.09*	.03	-.18	-.04

* $p<0.05$

Note: Bootstrap sample size = 1,000.
IEC = Instrumental Ethical Climate (perceptions).
Low = Minus 1 standard deviation from the mean; High = Plus 1 standard deviation from the mean.
LLCI = Bootstrapped Lower Limit Confidence Interval;
ULCI = Bootstrapped Upper Limit Confidence Interval.

CHAPTER 11: DISCUSSION

The findings from Study 2 provided further support that employee perceptions of situations that may induce vulnerability and helplessness can predict the presence of victimization at work from co-workers. When employees feel that they are not supported at work, whether this is a function of their supervisor or the climate more generally, they will tend to feel less control over their situation. The lack of control over one's situation is a central predictor of feelings of helplessness (Seligman, 1975). The two studies in this dissertation use models that suggest feelings of helplessness among employees and test whether the factors that have been suggested to induce feelings of helpless explain the presence of victimization. Moreover, the two studies also provided support for the increased likelihood of health-related consequences for targets, which is also suggested in the learned helplessness framework (Seligman, 1975). While the first study revealed that victimizing behaviors result in poorer levels of general health, the second study more specifically revealed the detrimental effects on emotional exhaustion at work. In addition, the second study demonstrated the important direct effects of perceptions of low supervisor support on being targeted through victimizing behaviors from co-workers. This is an important finding because it places greater attention on the significant and direct role held by an employee's supervisor in preventing victimizing behaviors. I discuss the results in more detail below.

The Effects of Perceived Supervisor Support and Perceptions of an Instrumental Ethical Climate on Workplace Victimization from co-workers

The results revealed that employee perceptions of supervisor support were negatively associated with workplace victimization from co-workers. This relationship was moderated by employee perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate, whereby employees who perceived low levels of support were even more likely to experience workplace victimization when they perceived an instrumental ethical climate. In other words, the perceptions of a lack of support from one's supervisor predicted higher levels of workplace victimization from co-workers when employees perceived that the climate encouraged self-interest-based and ego-driven behaviors. The results provided support for my predictions.

The results also provided some further support for the findings in study 1 that indicated the significant influence of perceived leadership support on workplace victimization from co-workers. Without support from one's supervisor, employees may feel helpless in their situation when they encounter issues and problems for which they need guidance and support. Feelings of helplessness may become stronger when these employees perceive that the work climate is also unsupportive. For example, when employees feel that their supervisor is unsupportive, they may look towards co-workers. However, when the work climate encourages self-interest and ego-based behaviors, these co-workers may become less likely to offer support. Instead, this climate may drive co-workers to take advantage of employees who feel unsupported and need guidance. Indeed, this may take the form of acts of victimization from co-workers at work. The interaction plots reveal an important role of the work climate: when employees feel

unsupported by their supervisor they become much more likely to experience victimization when there is an instrumental ethical climate.

The Effects of Perceived Supervisor Support on Emotional Exhaustion

The regression results revealed that employee perceptions of supervisor support were also significantly related to employee emotional exhaustion. More specifically, employees who perceive low levels of support from their supervisor are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion than those who perceive high levels of supervisor support. These results supported my prediction that employees who perceive low support from their supervisor will tend to experience prolonged and intense forms of stress (i.e., emotional exhaustion). Low perceptions of support from one's supervisor can mean that employees who encounter barriers or problems in their work feel that their supervisor is unsupportive and cannot be relied on. As discussed earlier, path-goal theory suggests that the achievement of one's goals is often dependent on the support that one receives from his/her supervisor in articulating and clarifying the path that employees need to take. The absence of this support will tend to reduce the likelihood that employees achieve their goals, which can result in situations of intense and prolonged stress.

The Mediating Effects of Workplace Victimization from co-workers on Perceived Supervisor Support and Emotional Exhaustion at Different Levels of Perceived Instrumental Ethical Climate

The test for mediated-moderation revealed that employees who report low levels of perceived supervisor support are more likely to experience victimizing behaviors from co-workers when perceiving a high instrumental ethical climate, while high workplace victimization from co-workers was associated with high emotional exhaustion. Similar to study 1, this finding supported my prediction of a mediated moderation relationship in which the mediated relationship varies across different levels of the moderator variable. This model illustrates important aspects of the process in which employees experience workplace victimization from co-workers and emotional exhaustion.

The results in this study further highlight an important contribution to the literature; namely, the role of employee perceptions of the work climate in explaining workplace victimization. The interaction between perceptions of support from one's supervisor and perceptions of the ethical climate helped explain reports of workplace victimization from co-workers. With limited attention to situational factors in the workplace victimization literature (Aquino & Thau, 2009), this study identifies important conditions in the organization that may induce vulnerability in employees. The findings supported my prediction that workplace victimization from co-workers would mediate the relationship between perceived supervisor support and emotional exhaustion. This suggests that when employees perceive low levels of support from their supervisor, they may be identified by co-workers as "safe" to target and experience victimization at work, which can result in intense and prolonged stress in the form of emotional exhaustion. In the next few sections, I discuss the theoretical contributions and avenues for future research, implications for managerial practice, and limitations of the study.

Theoretical Contributions and Avenues for Future Research

By drawing on insights from learned helplessness theory and using Martinko and Gardner's (1982) model of organizational induced learned helplessness, I developed a model to test the predictors of workplace victimization. Testing this model generated important insights about the role of employee perceptions about context in explaining workplace victimization. Based on insights from learned helplessness theory, study 1 illustrated that the combination of high role ambiguity, perceptions that leaders provide little support, and perceptions that the work climate is impersonal will induce victimizing behaviors. Given that perceived leadership support appeared to represent a key driver of the effects on workplace victimization in study 1, I posited perceived supervisor support as a focal predictor of workplace victimization in study 2. The results revealed that perceived supervisor support indeed transmits important direct effects on workplace victimization, while this relationship varied along perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate. In particular, employees who perceived low levels of supervisor support were more likely to be victimized when they also perceived an instrumental ethical climate. Learned helplessness theory would suggest that low supervisor support and a high instrumental ethical climate induce feelings of helplessness through perceptions that the supervisor and climate are unsupportive. Hence, the factors that predict helplessness were used to predict victimization. Until now, learned helplessness theory has only been applied as a theoretical framework to understand the outcomes of workplace victimization. In these two studies, I extend learned helplessness theory as a potential

framework for understanding workplace victimization (i.e., from antecedents to outcomes).

To theorize the increased likelihood of helpless (vulnerable) employees to elicit victimizing behaviors from others, I conceptually blend learned helplessness theory with victim precipitation theory. In doing so, I extend our understanding of victim precipitation theory. In the extant literature, victim precipitation theory simply suggests that targets who are vulnerable (or provocative) will precipitate victimizing behaviors from others (Aquino, 2000; Aquino & Barfield, 2000; Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Tepper et al., 2006). Insights from learned helplessness theory helps bolster these arguments by suggesting that employees who feel helpless will appear passive and numb to others, which will manifest itself in exchanges with others (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). Learned helplessness theory also provides a theoretical explanation for the outcomes of these victimizing behaviors (Seligman, 1975). Therefore, this study uses theoretical explanations to address some of the concerns from multiple researchers that the field of workplace victimization is under-theorized (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Baillien et al., 2009; Parzefall & Salin, 2010).

This study also addresses concerns about the lack of interactionist research in the field of workplace victimization (see Barling et al., 2009; Douglas et al., 2008; Hershcovis et al., 2009; Loh et al., 2010). While the extant literature has largely focused on variables such as role ambiguity in isolation, which has led to meta-analytic evidence supporting it as a predictor of workplace victimization (Bowling & Beehr, 2006), including the role of the broader context can help qualify some of the earlier conclusions.

To illustrate, Study 1 found that high levels of perceived leadership support significantly attenuates the effects of role ambiguity on the employee's likelihood of experiencing victimizing behaviors. When examining the simple slope plots of the interaction, I found that the slope for victimizing behaviors when perceived leadership support is high is nearly flat for low and high role ambiguity. I found that this moderated relationship further varies across perceptions of an impersonal work climate. In Study 2, I found support for a moderating effect of employee perceptions of an instrumental ethical climate. These are important contextual factors that play an important role in explaining workplace victimization. Therefore, this study provides evidence of the need to include psychological climate variables in future research on workplace victimization.

There are a number of important avenues for future research that extend from the findings in these two studies. First, Study 1 revealed that perceived leadership support significantly attenuated and suppressed the effects of role ambiguity on an employee's likelihood to experience victimizing behaviors. Future research should investigate whether perceived leadership support has similar effects on other dispositional and role-related variables such as negative affect, self-esteem, role conflict, role stress, among others. This can work towards continuing to address the mixed and conflicting results related to individual-level antecedents that have plagued the workplace victimization literature (see Aquino & Thau, 2009). This can also increase our understanding of the critical role played by leaders in organizations within the context of workplace victimization. In Study 2, I hypothesized that perceived supervisor support also plays a direct role in explaining workplace victimization. This hypothesis was supported, which

suggests that the absence of controlling for the effects of perceived supervisor and/or leader support (or using these as interaction terms with the independent variable) can result in inaccurate estimates.

Furthermore, future research should investigate the nature and form of some of these supportive leadership behaviors. For example, research should investigate whether transformational, servant, or socialized charismatic leadership behaviors interact with the relationship between individual-level variables and workplace victimization. Pushing further into the actual leadership behaviors that attenuate and suppress dispositional or other situational factors that tend to elicit victimizing behaviors can represent one important avenue through which appropriate interventions to victimizing behaviors can be identified.

While these studies found that perceptions of an impersonal work climate or instrumental ethical climate exacerbate the effects of other individual and situational factors that elicit victimizing behaviors, future research should investigate the work climates that can reduce or prevent victimizing behaviors from occurring. While a few studies have examined the role of psychological climate (e.g., Inness et al., 2008; Tepper et al., 2006), much more can be done to identify work climates that discourage perpetrators from engaging in such actions.

Finally, in Study 1 I found that workplace victimization mediates the relationship between role ambiguity and general health along important points of the moderators. In Study 2, I found that workplace victimization mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and emotional exhaustion along important points of

instrumental ethical climate. While general health and emotional exhaustion are very important outcomes to examine, future research should investigate other possible outcome variables that may also be affected such as work performance, absenteeism, turnover, and workplace deviance. Research can also extend this investigation to group- and organizational-level variables such as group and organizational culture. In other words, it is important to also investigate whether victimizing behaviors, leadership behaviors, and work climate variables create a culture that supports and encourages such behaviors more widely.

Implications for Practice

These two studies have several important implications for managerial practice. These implications can be described at the role, leadership, and work climate levels. Study 1 found that role ambiguity is positively associated with victimizing behaviors and negatively associated with general health. Therefore, role ambiguity can have important adverse effects on the general health of employees who experience it. Managers should ensure that role expectations and requirements are as clearly communicated to employees as possible. This will help clarify the effort to performance and performance to outcome relationships for employees, which are related to feelings of helplessness (Bheer & Bhagat, 1985).

Study 1 also found that high levels of perceived leadership support can significantly attenuate and suppress the effects of role ambiguity on experiencing victimizing behaviors. This finding has very important implications for managers. Some

work roles (e.g., software developers/programmers, risk analysts, management consultants, leadership roles) are inherently ambiguous; thus, perhaps not much can be done to reduce feelings of role ambiguity in certain occupations. However, the results of this study reveal that employees who experience high role ambiguity will be much less likely to experience victimizing behaviors when they perceive leaders as supportive. High levels of support from leaders can reduce feelings of helplessness about one's work role, which can make feelings of confusion and lack of clarity less salient to others because of the increased confidence that will tend to be associated with feelings of support from one's leaders. Furthermore, Study 2 provided more evidence of the role of employee perceptions of supervisor support. In particular, employee perceptions of supervisor support served as an important predictor of being subjected to victimizing behaviors. Therefore, managers should focus on ensuring that they display signs of support towards employees. This will also prevent employees from appearing passive and numb, which tends to be associated with feelings of helplessness. As the two studies revealed, when employees perceive that their supervisor or leaders are not supportive, they become much more likely to experience victimizing behaviors from others.

Finally, the role of employee perceptions of the climate more broadly also played an important role in explaining victimizing behaviors. In both studies, employee perceptions of the climate served moderating roles. Managers in the organization should ensure that the cues transmitted through the work climate signals that employees are supported and important to the organization. Moreover, the work climate should also signal to employees that they would be supported if they feel that they have not been

treated well and that their values should not be compromised. A work climate that sends these signals can also deter potential perpetrators from engaging in victimizing behaviors. The findings from these two studies reveal the importance of devoting greater attention to climate-based factors.

Limitations

As with Study 1, Study 2 also was not without its limitations. Because all of the variables were measured based on self-report, there may be issues related to common method variance. Nevertheless, the presence of interaction effects can mitigate to some extent issues related to common method (Evans, 1985; Lian et al., 2012). To examine whether common method variance was a problem in this study, I conducted a post-hoc Harman's single factor test (see Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). All four variables were entered into a single exploratory factor analysis and I constrained the fixed number of factors to extract to 1. By running a factor analysis, this test allowed me to identify whether there was the presence of a single factor solution. If there is the presence of one general factor, this would suggest substantial common method variance since this factor would explain the majority of variance in the variables (over 50 percent) (Chiaburu & Baker, 2006; Podsakoff & Organ, 2006). Running this test revealed that one single factor did not explain the majority of original variance in the variables. Rather, the dominant factor only explained 35 percent of the variance.

Furthermore, the variables investigated lent themselves to self-report. For example, employee perceptions of supervisor support and ethical climate would be

known primarily by the employee him/herself. Similarly, acts of victimization are not easily observed (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006); thus, self-report was needed for this variable. Finally, the extent to which an employee feels emotionally exhausted will also be known primarily by the employee since emotional exhaustion may not always be apparent to others.

The second limitation is that the research design is cross-sectional. This means that I cannot infer causality based on my results. Nevertheless, I used theory to generate my hypotheses, which suggested the potential directionality of the relationships. Moreover, the testing of interactions allowed me to understand the simple slopes and changes of direction as one variable interacted with another. Because this study is cross-sectional, I encourage future research to examine these relationships with longitudinal research designs.

Finally, the study is limited by the nature of the sample. Unlike Study 1 which drew upon respondents from multiple organizations, Study 2 drew upon a sample of employees in a large hospital. In addition, females represented a large percentage of the sample (90%). Therefore, the extent to which these findings are generalizable to the wider population is not certain. I encourage future research to examine these relationships across multiple samples to enhance the external validity of these findings.

CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

Workplace victimization has become a topic of scholarly, managerial, and media interest because of the negative effects that it can have on the target of the behaviors. In these two studies, I sought to understand the factors that make an employee more vulnerable and helpless to victimizing behaviors. I also sought to understand how victimizing behaviors affect the target's general health. The findings suggest that factors that make an employee feel unsupported in the workplace – rooted in one's work role (Study 1), perceptions of leader and/or supervisor support (Study 1 and 2), and perceptions of the work climate (Study 1 and Study 2) – also make him/her more likely to report victimizing behaviors. The findings also reveal that these factors then have negative implications for the target's general health (Study 1) and emotional exhaustion (Study 2) through victimization. This research not only points to the factors that can lead to increased victimization at work, but also suggests the potential for intervention in order to deter such behaviors from occurring in organizations. The findings from Study 1 interestingly revealed that perceptions of a supportive leader and perceptions that the work climate is not impersonal can attenuate and suppress the effects that feelings of role ambiguity has in eliciting victimizing behaviors. The findings from Study 2 revealed the important direct effects that perceptions of low supervisor support can have on one's likelihood of experiencing victimizing behaviors at work. The two studies consistently revealed the important role played by supervisors and leaders in the organization. When employees experience role ambiguity, support from supervisors and leaders in the organization can play a critical role in reducing the likelihood that the employee feels

helpless and vulnerable, which can deter victimizing behaviors from others. Moreover, feelings of helplessness and vulnerability can play an even greater role when the work climate appears to represent another source of absent support. In particular, work climates that appear impersonal and/or encourage self-interest behaviors can signal to employees that there are limited avenues for support.

The theoretical framework suggests that managers should proactively ensure that employees do not feel helpless in their work roles; rather, that they feel supported. This can, and should, begin at the top of the organization. Senior executives of the organization can set the tone throughout the organization through the organizational culture/work climate that they encourage. Using this work climate, they should develop reward and punishment systems based on behaving in ways that support and perpetuate the values espoused by the work climate. These reward and punishment systems should, of course, apply to leaders and supervisors in the organization. Leaders and supervisors in the organization should also ensure that they display signs of support to employees at regular intervals. These signs of support can be verbal and/or through actions. When employees feel supported by the supervisor, their leaders, and the work climate, they will tend to feel less helpless and vulnerable when they encounter problems or issues in their work. In other words, the dissertation's findings that the presence of support through multiple sources including the supervisor and leaders as well as the work climate makes employees less likely to experience victimizing behaviors is an important message taken from this study and may represent a key avenue towards reducing feelings of

helplessness, instilling feelings of confidence and resiliency, and ultimately reducing victimizing behaviors.

Finally, future research should extend this dissertation by investigating other climate types that may effectively reduce the likelihood of employees engaging in victimizing behaviors. Future research should also examine what types of individuals – based on personality traits, demographics, and so on – may be at greatest risks in what types of situations and work climates. Moreover, while this dissertation focused on support from leaders and supervisors, future research may also examine support from co-workers and human resource management representatives.

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APPENDIX A

Exploratory Factor Analysis – Study 1

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Q6.49 Thinking about your current/ most recent employer over the last two years, how often have you experienced- pressure from someone else to do work below your level of competence			.432	
Q6.49 Thinking about your current/ most recent employer over the last two years, how often have you experienced- being given an unmanageable workload or impossible deadlines			.449	
Q6.49 Thinking about your current/ most recent employer over the last two years, how often have you experienced- being insulted or having offensive remarks made about you			.834	
Q6.49 Thinking about your current/ most recent employer over the last two years, how often have you experienced- being treated in a disrespectful or rude way			.825	
Q6.49 Thinking about your current/ most recent employer over the last two years, how often have you experienced- being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work			.662	
Q6.49 Thinking about your current/ most recent employer over the last two years, how often have you experienced- actual physical violence at work			.558	
B1. I am clear what is expected of me at work (reverse-coded)		.808		
B2. I am clear about the goals and objectives for my department at work (reverse-coded)		.790		
B3. I know how to go about getting my job done at work (reverse-coded)		.758		

B4. I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are at work (reverse-coded)		.827		
B5. I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organization (reverse-coded)		.741		
B25. How strongly do you agree or disagree - I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work (self comp)	.672			
B27. How strongly do you agree or disagree - My line manager encourages me at work (self comp)	.760			
B30. How strongly do you agree or disagree - I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work (self comp)	.761			
C2. Now thinking about the managers at your main workplace, to what extent do you agree or disagree - Managers can be relied upon to keep to their promises (self comp)	.805			
C3. Now thinking about the managers at your main workplace, to what extent do you agree or disagree - Managers are sincere in attempting to understand employees' views (self comp)	.826			
C4. Now thinking about the managers at your main workplace, to what extent do you agree or disagree - Managers deal with employees honestly (self comp)	.793			
D1. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following... - Where I work, the needs of the organisation always come before the needs of the people (self comp)				.795
D2. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following... - Where I work, you have to compromise your principles (self comp)				.743
D3. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following... - Where I work, people are not treated as individuals (self comp)				.696

APPENDIX B

Measures for Study 1

Mediator: Workplace Victimization

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.72	6

Items:
Over the past two years, how often have you experienced:
1=Never; 2=Once; 3=Now and then; 4=Monthly; 5=Weekly; 6=Daily

1. Pressure from someone else to do work below your level of competence
2. Being given an unmanageable workload or impossible deadlines
3. Being insulted or having offensive remarks made about you
4. Being treated in a disrespectful or rude way
5. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work
6. Actual physical violence at work

Items taken from *Negative Acts Questionnaire* (Einarsen et al., 1994). Used widely.

IV: Role ambiguity

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.87	5

How often do each of the following statement apply to you at work:
1=Never; 2=Seldom; 3=Sometimes; 4=Often; 5=Always

1. I am clear about what is expected of me at work
2. I am clear about the goals and objectives for my department at work
3. I know how to go about getting my job done at work
4. I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are at work
5. I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organization

Re-coded for Role Ambiguity - (similarly re-coded in e.g., Gong et al., 2001 – JAP; Yun et al., 2007 – JAP).

Scale for role ambiguity published (Edwards et al. 2008, *Work & Stress*).

Moderator 1: Perceived Leadership Support

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.90	6

How strongly do you agree or disagree:
1=Strongly disagree; 2=Tend to disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Tend to agree; 5=Strongly agree

1. I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work
2. My line manager encourages me at work
3. I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work

Now thinking about the managers at your main workplace, to what extent do you agree or disagree:
1=Strongly disagree; 2=Tend to disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Tend to agree; 5=Strongly agree

4. Managers can be relied upon to keep to their promises
5. Managers are sincere in attempting to understand employees' views
6. Managers deal with employees honestly

Perceived Leadership support as a construct (Amabile et al., 2004 – *Leadership Quarterly*).

Similar scale published in Edwards et al., 2008 – *Work and Stress*;
Abridged version published in Timming 2011 – *International Journal of HRM.*

Moderator 2: Perceived Impersonal Climate

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.79	3

Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following:
1=Strongly disagree; 2=Tend to disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Tend to agree; 5=Strongly agree

1. Where I work, the needs of the organization always come before the needs of the people
2. Where I work, you have to compromise your principles
3. Where I work, people are not treated as individuals

DV: General Health

How is your health in general?
1=Very good; 2=Good; 3=Fair; 4=Bad; 5=Very bad

(Re-coded so that higher levels reflect better health).

Single item variable for general health published in: e.g., Williams et al., 2006 – *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology.*

Research demonstrating that a single item general health measure is more appropriate to use when measured as the outcome variable (Bowling, 2005).

"The use of single-item self-report assessments of general health as an indication of health status is long established (Mossey & Shapiro, 1982)." (Williams et al., 2006: p. 30).

APPENDIX C

Measures for Study 2

Mediator Variable: Workplace Victimization by co-worker

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.89	10

How often has a CO-WORKER done this act to you in your place of work?
1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=At least once a month, 4=At least once a week, 5=At least once a day

1. Withholding information which affects your performance.
2. Spreading of gossip and rumours about you.
3. Ignoring or excluding you.
4. Making insulting or offensive remarks about your person (i.e. habits), your attitudes or your private life.
5. Shouting at you or targeting you with spontaneous anger (or rage).
6. Repeating reminders of your errors or mistakes.
7. Ignoring or facing a hostile reaction when you approach.
8. Persistently criticizing your work and effort.
9. Making practical jobs about you carried out by people you don't get along with.
10. Using email or other online media to harass, threaten, or intimidate you.

IV: Perceived Supervisor Support

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.96	6

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.
1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree a little, 5=Strongly agree

1. My supervisor values my contribution.
2. My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values.
3. My supervisor really cares about my well-being.
4. My supervisor is willing to help me when I need a special favor.
5. My supervisor shows very strong concern for me.

6. My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work.

Moderator Variable: Instrumental Ethical Climate

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.83	7

I am going to ask you some questions about how the general climate in your unit actually is. Please answer the question based on how the climate is, not how you would prefer it to be.
1=False, 2=Mostly false, 3=Somewhat false, 4=Somewhat true, 5=Mostly true, 6=Completely true.

1. In this unit, people protect their own interests above all else.
2. In this unit, people are mostly out for themselves.
3. There is no room for one`s own personal morals or ethics in this unit.
4. People are expected to do anything to further the company`s interests in this unit, regardless of the consequences.
5. People in this unit are concerned with the company`s interests – to the exclusion of all else.
6. In this unit, work is considered substandard only when it hurts the company`s interests.
7. The major responsibility of people in this unit is to control costs.

Dependent Variable: Emotional Exhaustion

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.93	5

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement in relation to your work.
1=Never, 2=Almost never, 3=Rarely, 4=Sometimes, 5=Often, 6=Very often, 7=Always

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. Working all day is really a strain for me.
5. I feel burned out from my work.